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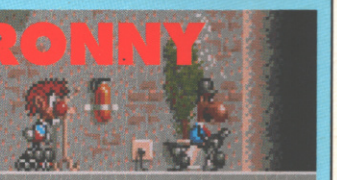
FLAMES OF FREEDOM

Does bigger *really* mean better?

WANT TO KNOW MORE? THEN FLICK TO PAGE 5! →

ROLLING RONNY
Playable delivery-boy capers in this preview of Virgin's horizontally-scrolling newie



CAPTAIN PLANET
Mindscape's ecological super-hero breaks cover with this exclusive playable preview

BULLFROGGER

Yes, it's true! Bullfrog turn their hands to a *Frogger* game – and it's a doozy!

PLUS! •AIR ACE II Excellent *Flying Shark* style PD

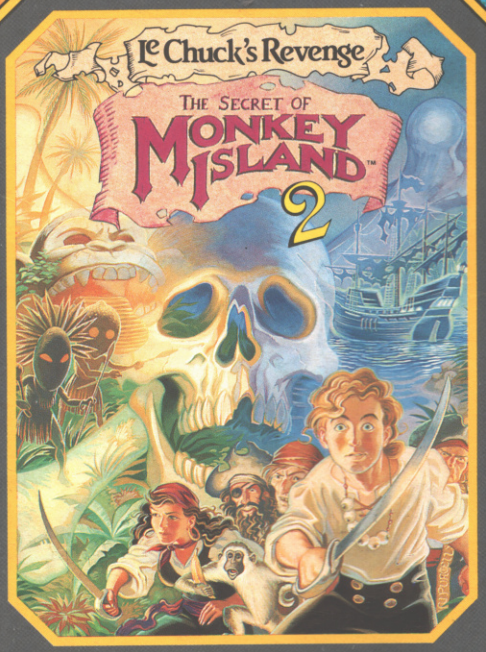
CAN'T SEE YOU[illegible]OR POSTCARDS STUCK HERE? THEN [illegible] AS[illegible]COUNT[illegible]!

TERMINATOR 2
Will Arnie get *another* raw deal on the Amiga?

ISSUE 6

OVER 300 GAMES RATED! MORE AMIGA REVIEWS THAN ANY OTHER MAGAZ[illegible]

THE MARK



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Screenshot from PC

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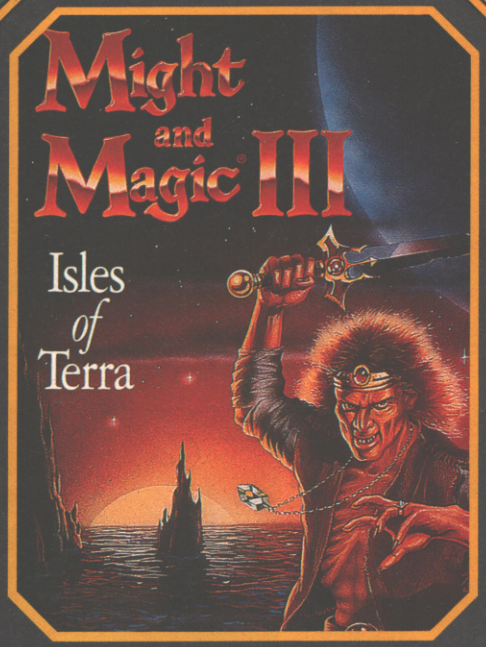
OF A WINNER



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Screenshot from PC

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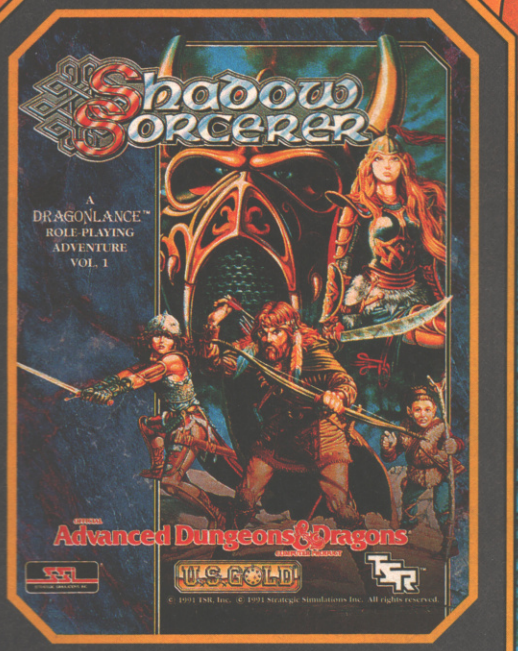

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Screenshot from Atari ST

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Screen shots are only intended to be illustrative of the gameplay and not the screen graphics which vary considerably between different formats in quality and appearance and are subject to the computers specifications.

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OVER 300
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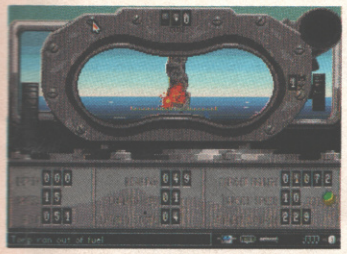
MONTH

CRUISE FOR A CORPSE
Simply France's most eagerly awaited adventure *ever*... Page 28

ROBIN HOOD
Hoopy fun and escapades in Medieval England... Page 38



SILENT SERVICE 2
Who says submarine games *have* to be boring..? Page 40

UTOPIA
Sim City meets *Populous* meets...*Legoland*? Page 42

112 IN THE STYLE OF...
Sensible Software's Jon Hare takes *Mega lo Mania* into a whole new league.

GAMES REVIEWED THIS ISSUE

OCTOBER

FULL PRICE
Big Business----------85
Cruise For A Corpse --28
Darkman ----------83
Dino Wars ----------80
Final Fight ----------86
Flames Of Freedom: Midwinter II ----------22
Geisha ----------80
King's Bounty ----------83
Magic Pockets----------34
Monster Business------85
Robin Hood ----------38
Rodland ----------32
Secret Of The Silver Blades ----------85
Silent Service II---------40
Terminator 2 – Judgment Day ----------26
Utopia----------42

BUDGET
Deadline ----------89
Dungeons, Amethysts, Alchemists And Everythin' ----------89
Insector Hecti In The Interchange ----------88
Red Heat----------88
Shufflepuck Cafe -------88
Skychase ----------88
Sorcerer----------89
Stryx ----------88
Waterloo ----------89

COMPILATIONS
Rainbow Collection ---90
Grandstand----------90

PERIPHERALS
Trojan Light Phaser---80

PUBLIC DOMAIN
Buck Rogers ----------93
Bug Bash ----------93
Cubulus----------93
ED209 – The Revenge----------93
Flashbier----------94
Go–Moku ----------94
Ladybug ----------93
Middle East Mania -----94
Nucleus ----------94
Pom Pom Gunner--------94
RoboCop Goes To Iraq ----------94
Wizzy's Quest ----------93

"Hello, Future Publishing."

disk SIX

"Hello. I'm a reader of Britain's best-selling Amiga games magazine AMIGA POWER, and I was wondering if you could tell me what they're going to have on their impossibly wonderful coverdisk this month?"

"Hold on just one moment, I'll put you through to Stuart Campbell..."

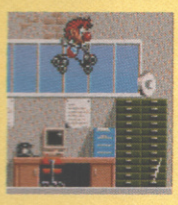
"Hello, AMIGA POWER, Britain's best-selling Amiga games magazine, Stuart Campell speaking, how can I be of assistance?"

"Um, well, I was just trying to find out what games and things you've got on your coverdisk this month."

"Ah, now that's an easy one. Crammed into our bursting-at-the-seams 720K this month we've got an exclusive demo of the first level of Virgin's corking new arcade-adventure on rollerskates *Rolling Ronny*, then there's a tasty chunk of Mindscape's cartoon licence *Captain Planet* (currently only available to purchasers of the new Amiga Cartoon Classics pack) for you to try out. Not only that, but in Nostalgia Corner we've got an exclusive complete game from programming megastars Bullfrog (!), in the style of the classic coin-op *Frogger*, and last but not in any way conceivably least, there's *Air Ace 2*, almost certainly the best game ever created with *Shoot-'Em-Up Construction Kit* and a seriously challenging *Flying Shark*-style zapper to boot. What more could your heart desire, eh?"

"Erm, nothing I can think of."

AND THIS IS DISK SIX



ROLLING RONNY

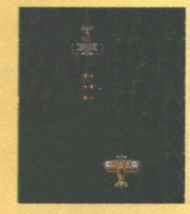
...or Career Opportunities, courtesy of Virgin. In this game of appalling wage slavery you play Ronny, a rollerskating clown who earns himself a pitiful wage as an errand boy, delivering messages and packages to assorted characters in a wide range of office-type settings. In this exclusive demo we've got the office stage for you to try, and we think it'll take you quite a while to get through.

CAPTAIN PLANET

The full version of this environmentally-sound platform challenge from top programming chap Tony Crowther allows you to control any of the five Planeteers (a sort of band of ecological vigilantes), but this demo gives you a chance to try your hand at one, in part of the first of six levels. Use the power of Heart to help save the world from drowning in toxic waste and unpleasant stuff like that.

BULLFROGGER

If you thought *Powermonger* was good, wait until you see this! Not content with cornering the market in god sims, Bullfrog (with just a little bit of help from AMIGA POWER) now bring you, the breathless public, their almost-conversion of Sega's ancient arcade game *Frogger*. Practice your Green Cross Code and (in keeping with the *Captain Planet* theme) do your bit for the world's much ignored amphibian community at the same time!



AIR ACE 2

And just to ensure we've got the complete spectrum of arcade fun on this disk, this WWI blaster is just about the best PD shoot-'em-up we've seen. Climb into your biplane (or biplanes, of you've got a chum handy) and race off into the wide blue yonder to take on the might of the Kaiser's entire airforce!

What's that? You want to know MORE? What do you think this is, the Encyclopaedia Britannica or something? Oh, alright then, turn the page for the complete lowdown...

ROLLING RONNY

Publisher: Virgin
Authors: Rene Straub and Orlando

Ronny is an errand boy. Except he isn't. Well, he is most of the time ('Get on with it' - reader's voice), but right now he's engaged on a mission of an altogether more demanding nature. Ronny, for reasons not entirely clear, has been chosen by Scotland Yard to help them retrieve a number of stolen jewels, which careless thieves have left scattered all round the sleepy town of Fieldington, before the news of the theft outrages the local citizenry.

He's an undercover agent though, so he still has to run errands for people he might bump into on his travels, not only to keep up his cover but also to make enough money for the bus fare between the parts of the town where the thieves have hidden the jewels. Scotland Yard – stingy or what?

Anyway, in this exclusive demo of Virgin's forthcoming arcade adventure, you control Ronny as he skates through the Municipal Offices stage (the fourth level of the game proper's nine). The main objective is to collect all the jewels (inexplicably concealed by the baddies in small flashing multi-coloured boxes), but you'll also have to deliver messages for various characters if you want to make some money, without which you won't be allowed to finish the stage. You can jump, duck and throw salami (?) at the numerous baddies you'll meet on your travels, as well as collect a number of extra weapons to help you out in particularly tricky situations (see I DON'T NEED THIS PRESSURE, RON).

I DON'T NEED THIS PRESSURE, RON

You can relieve the pressure on Ronny and make his life a little easier by picking up these useful items.

HEALTH BONUS - boosts your energy meter a few points

ENERGY BONUS - boosts your energy meter to maximum

TIME BONUS - gives you three minutes of extra time

MONEY - often found just lying around or dropped by baddies

SURPRISE - a mystery bonus (so no surprises there)

SUPERJUMP - gives Ronny three super-high jumps

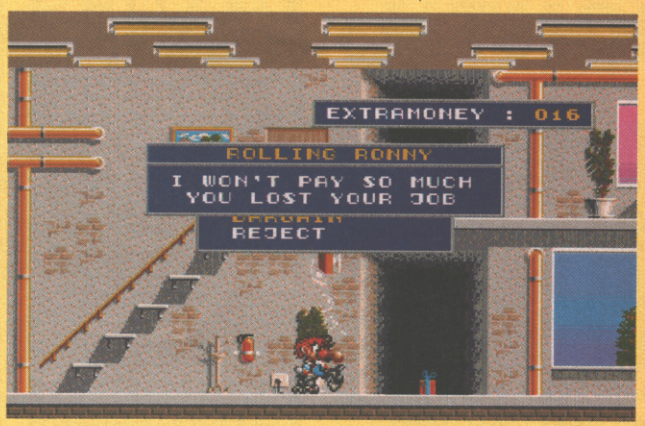
POWERSNEEZE - a smart bomb, kills everything on screen - just don't ask how it works...

STENCHALIZER - a particularly potent lump of cheese, the horrendous aroma from this item freezes all baddies in their tracks for 10 seconds

MAGNETOFLUCT - automatically collects all collectable objects on screen

MEGAHONK - pardon? For no good reason whatsoever, this useful hooter grants Ronny 10 seconds or so of complete invincibility

DRIVING A HARD BARGAIN

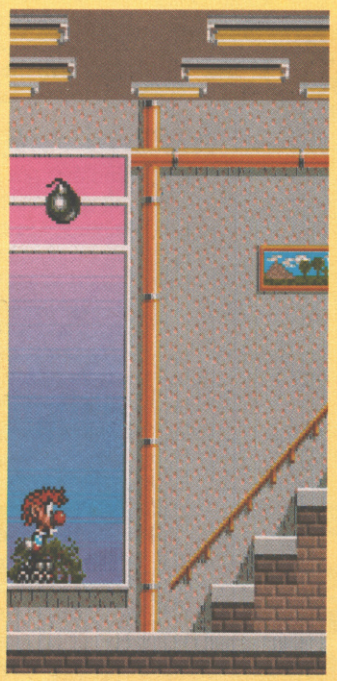


When Ronny bumps into someone who wants him to deliver a message for them, he has three options. he can accept the job at the rate of pay offered, he can decline it (if, say, he's in a bit of a hurry or he's already got as much dosh as he needs), or he can attempt to haggle. Successfully negotiating will add four pence (wow!) to Ronny's fee every time he does it, but if he gets too greedy the character will withdraw the job offer, so don't push your luck.

Impressed? We think you will be. As was the case with last month's coverdisk version of *Barbarian II*, there's more than enough to see and do, and this time the graphics and presentation verge on the completely original. Also, there's plenty of good old fashioned humour

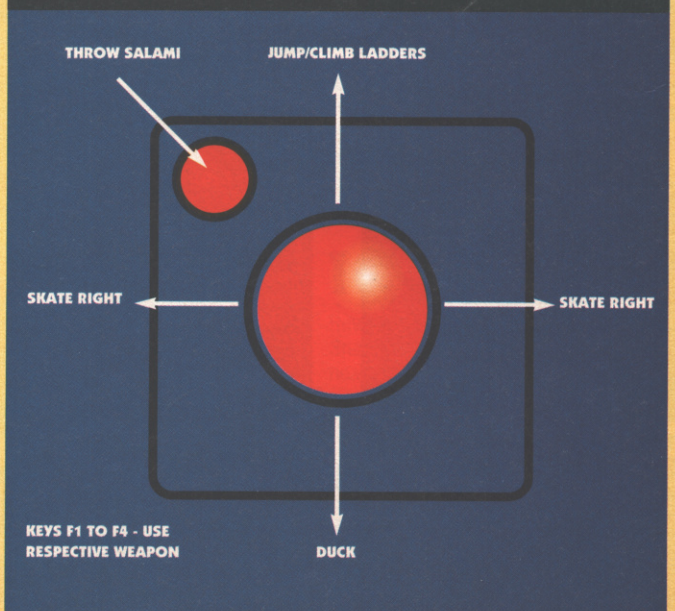
If you want to see more, the complete version should be hitting a street near you any day now, at the usual price of £25.99.

This map shows you just how big the job's going to be, so start saving for those expensive bus fares



Don't worry, Scotland yard - Rolling Ronny's on the case (sorry)

ROLLING RONNY CONTROLS



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AMIGA POWER
ISSUE SIX OCT 1991

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Thanks this Issue to: Lam Tang for the loan of his pic of the Starship Enterprise, Eric Matthews for more *Gods* tips, and to the Pope for his version of *Speedy Gonzales*.

COMPETITION WINNER: Things are looking up in the Contents Page Compo. Last month, following an amazingly crass response to the 'Design a Movie Licence Game' compo, we pleaded for you to send us interesting postcards. A decent game will be despatched to Philip Bell of Newcastle for two bouncers in stockings and suspenders, while Alan Groby of Leicester wins an atrocious game for his unbelievably dull farmyard machinery. The guy who sent us the beautiful girl with the stockings on wins nothing but our gratitude (the chump failed to write his name and address on the postcard).

THIS MONTH'S COMPO: For some free software, just send in a picture of the media personality or otherwise famous person you think looks like a member of the AMIGA POWERteam (with some sort of explanation of course).

AMIGA POWER comes to you from Future Publishing, the stunningly successful publishers of Britain's biggest (and best!) 'leisure' computing magazines. There's Amiga Format, Amiga Shopper, ST Format, Your Sinclair, Commodore Format, Amstrad Action, New Computer Express, Sega Power, PC Plus, PC Answers, Public Domain, PC Format and 8000 Plus on the computing side, Classic CD, Needlecraft and Mountain Biking UK on the non-computer side.

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10 TRUE STORIES

Where's the best place to go for a peek at next year's games? What's heppening with the new version of *Star Trek*? Who is foolish enough to be planning a game based on Jimmy Hill? When will the *Mind Possessing Aliens From Hyperspace* be landing? All these questions are answered in our expanded news section. PLUS Rock Hard Quiz, Crib Sheets, Oh Dear! and more.

17 THE CHARTS

Manchester United has made it to the top, and *Full Contact* is still hanging in there, but what of the other 98 games that are jamming up the charts? Find out the climbers and fallers with our official Gallup listings.

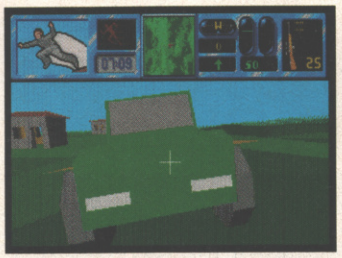
47 COMPLETE CONTROL

Take charge of the trickiest titles with the help the most reliable tips section around. This month: *Hero Quest, Blade Warrior*, plus the final sections of *Prince of Persia* and *Gods*.

70 IF I'D KNOWN THEN...

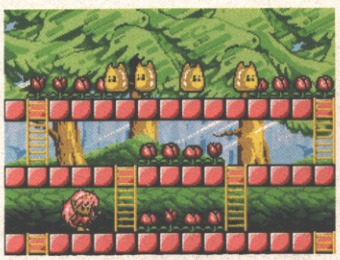
Simon Phipps, the man behind *Rick Dangerous* and *Switchblade* (amongst others) ruminates on his successes and failures.

GAMES OF THE M



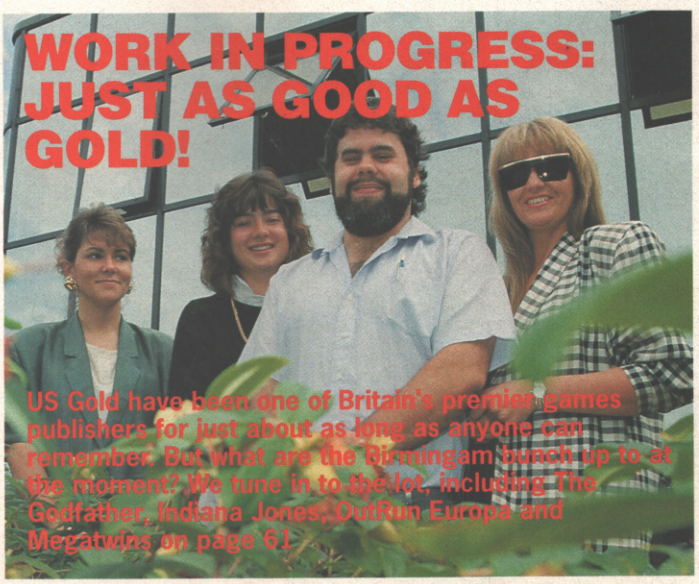
FLAMES OF FREEDOM
It's huge, it's pretty – but is it any good? Find out on... Page 22

TERMINATOR 2
We're all expecting big-time excitement from Ocean... Page 26



RODLAND
Introducing a new genre, the 'squirrel basher'... Page 32

MAGIC POCKETS
The Bitmaps are back with their first ever platformer. Page 34



74 WHY ARE ALL FRENCH GAMES SO BONKERS?

We packed our man off to the continent on a quest for the weirdest game from the home of weirdness...

99 DO THE WRITE THING

Bigger, better, more. That's the theme of this month's bubbling letters page. And now there's money to be won for your opinions too...

105 THE BOTTOM LINE

Reviews, reviews and more reviews. Snappy and informative summaries on nearly 300 of last year's top games in our unique reference section.

97 ONE HELL OF A COMPETITION

Mirrorsoft were so chuffed with our hugely enthusiastic review of *Mega-lo-Mania* that they've came up with a killer of a competition prize – every game they've ever released ever (!!), plus every game they're going to for the next five years!!

CAPTAIN PLANET

Publisher: Mindscape
Authors: Tony Crowther, Jason Kingsley

THE, ER, 'PLOT'

The early risers among you may well be familiar with the adventures of the world's first environmentally-sound superhero, Captain Planet. On his Saturday morning cartoon show he regularly thwarts the evil plans of some nasty baddie or other to pollute the entire world with toxic waste, with the help of five mortal chums, each of which has been endowed with one of the elemental powers of Wind, Water, Earth, Fire and 'Heart'.

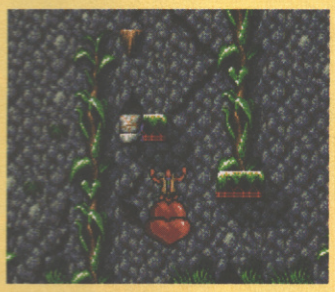
In fact, the perfect-toothed teens usually have to do most of the work themselves, as (for a superhero) old Captain Planet is something of a weed. Coming into contact with anything of an even slightly toxic nature renders him completely helpless (much like one of Big Daddy's tag-team partners, for any of you who remember TV wrestling), lying whimpering until one of our five fresh-faced heroes or heroines comes to his rescue. With this in mind, our Planeteers (for such is their title) take the initiative, and set out to... well, do lots of ecologically helpful stuff generally (for a full storyline rundown, check out the full release coming your way in plenty of time for Christmas).

In this demo version, you control Ma-Ti, the Indian boy with the power of 'Heart'. What this means is that when you press the fire button, a stream of, well, 'hearts' issues forth from Ma-Ti's magic ring. As well as zapping baddies, these hearts can, when fired at small shrubs on the ground, cause them to shoot up beanstalk-like into the sky, providing Ma-Ti with a handy ladder with which he can ascend the screen, looking for more environmental wrongs to put right (beware though – after a while the lack of continuing sustenance will cause the stalks to shrink back to their initial titchiness!).

And there's more! If Ma-Ti finds himself losing his footing on some high outcrop and plummetting to his death, pushing the joystick down and firing off a few hearts will miraculously provide him with a floating platform of sorts which he can stand on, allowing him to drift gently to the ground in complete safety. Other dangers in Ma-Ti's path include pools of toxic waste, slimy mutated creatures, and laser beams – all of which will kill him dead given half the chance.

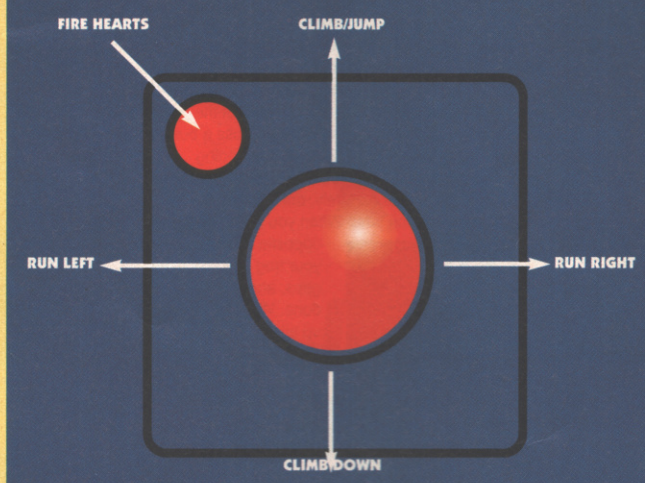
That's about all you need to know for now, so get out there and get, er, gardening. Oh yes, and remember – the power is yours!

Waste pipes will cause toxic clouds (!) to form, which then rain lightning down on our hero. Zap them with hearts to neutralize them.



Don't worry about those long falls – *Captain Planet* is the platform game where you carry your own platforms!

CAPTAIN PLANET CONTROLS



LOADING INSTRUCTIONS

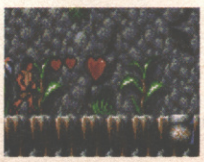
If you've got one meg or more of memory, press F2 on the menu screen. If you've only got 512K, first click on the left mouse button, THEN press F2. After a short delay, the demo should now load normally.

PERCY THROWER NEVER DID IT LIKE THIS

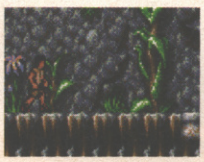
You can forget all that tedious mucking about with starch and sugars and chlorophyll and photosynthesis in Captain Planet. Growing plants is as easy as 1, 2, 3.

1. Take a plant like this...

2. Give it a bit of this...



3. And hey bingo, you've got this!



SO WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO WITH THIS THING, THEN?

Getting the AMIGA POWER coverdisk up and running and providing you with hours of top-quality entertainment should be easier than falling off a greasy log on a ski-slope. Just follow these three steps to Software Heaven...

1. Make sure you've got your Amiga switched off, with a joystick plugged into Joystick Port Two and a mouse plugged into Joystick Port One.
2. Insert the disk into the internal drive and switch the power on.
3. Wait for a few seconds until the beautiful menu screen pops up.
4. Choose which game or demo you want to load and press the appropriate function key...

For more detailed instructions on loading any particular game, see the section on that game on these very pages. Incidentally, it's not a good idea to remove the disk from the drive at any time during play. So don't do it.

DON'T WORRY. WE'LL GET YOU A NEW ONE, MRS McNULTY...

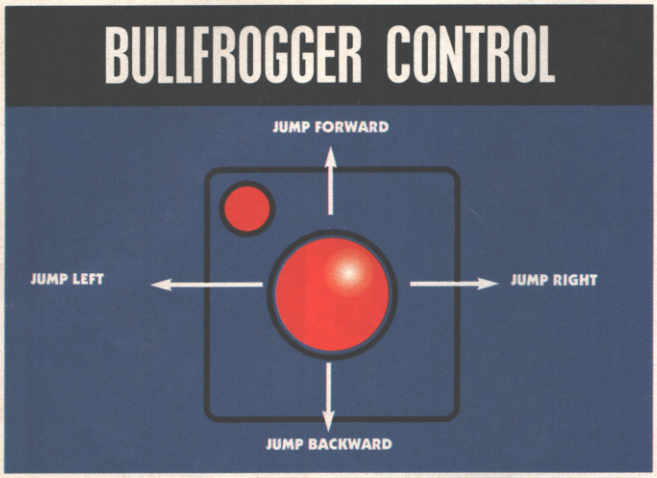
Is your life a mess? Do your friends avoid you in the street? Do you wish you'd never been born at all? Sounds to us like your disk doesn't work. But now isn't the time for panic – there are several steps you can take to banish Guru Meditation misery for ever.

1. First, try switching off your machine, removing all unnecessary peripherals (extra disk drive, memory expansion etc), and starting again from scratch. You'd be surprised at the difference this can make to your sensitive and easily-upset Amiga.
2. Still no joy? Well, maybe the disk has become corrupted? In that case, you may be able to repair it using the Disk Doctor program that comes on the Workbench disk supplied with your Amiga. Full instructions for using Disk Doctor can be found in your user's manual.
3. Didn't help? Okay, now you can panic.
4. Ahem. What we meant to say was, if none of the above remedies get your disk working the way it should, just sling the disk (and NOT the whole magazine, please) into a jiffy bag along with a stamped addressed envelope (and details of your machine configuration too, if you really want to be helpful), and post the whole thing off to AMIGA POWER Disk Six Returns, Disk Copy Labs plc, Unit A, West March, London Road, Daventry, NN4 4SA.

disk SIX — AMIGA POWER PRESENTS THE VERY BEST OF PD

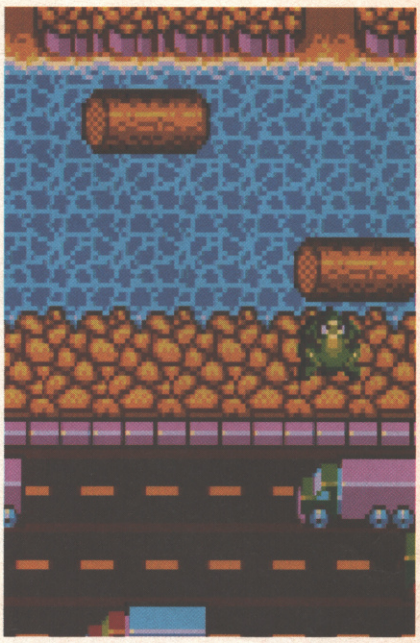
BULLFROGGER
EXCLUSIVE COMPLETE GAME FROM BULLFROG!

Initially written to be a little loading-screen game for *Populous*, *Bullfrogger* was pulled because Bullfrog didn't want to get into trouble with Sega, and because *Populous* hardly took any time to load anyway. But we've rescued it from obscurity to show you the kind of thing that Peter Molyneux likes to play in his spare time. This is a simplified version of arcade *Frogger*, but the principle is exactly the same – guide your frogs across a busy road without getting them squished by pounding juggernauts, then cross the fast-flowing river by jumping onto logs which, rather bizarrely, drift downstream and upstream at the same time. When you reach the opposite river bank, jump your frog into one of the gaps, and your job's done. When you've filled up all the gaps you'll get a new screenful of amphibians to rescue, and the game continues until all the poor blighters are killed.



LOADING INSTRUCTIONS

To load *Bullfrogger*, just hit the F3 key on the menu screen. However, when you run out of frogs the game will jump back to the menu. This isn't a bug, just press F3 again and the game will restart.

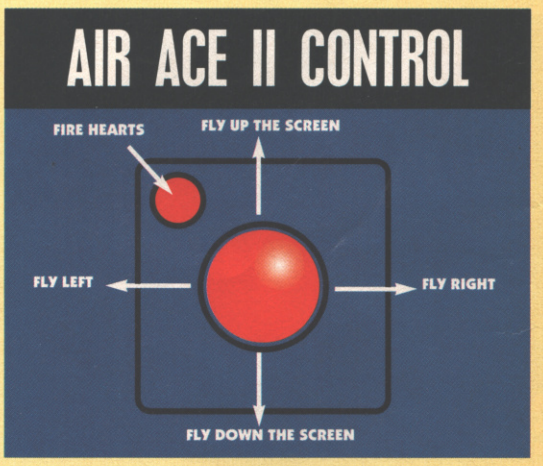


Classic arcade fun, given a tasty reinterpretation by the Bullfrog team.

AIR ACE II
SEUCK BLASTER BY ROBERT GRACE

We've seen a lot of *Shoot-'Ém-Up Constuction Kit* games in the past few months, from cutie platform lookalikes to SWIV clones to tacky Gulf War cash-ins, but this is far and away the best one we've come across.

Based in a WWI setting, it's a game that's low on complications and high on challenge and addictiveness. Using the joystick to control your biplane, you fly around over the green fields of France, coming under incessant attacks from the German air force. The fire button sends a burst of machine-gun fire speeding through the sky, and if you survive for long enough (not an easy task by any means) you'll even get the chance to take out some land-based targets (air-to-ground weaponry was obviously at a more advanced stage during WWI than was previously thought) as well as shooting down endless Baron Von Richthoven types. If you have a similarly-minded chum around, you can team up against the Hun by simply plugging another joystick into Port One and pressing fire.



LOADING INSTRUCTIONS

If you have a one meg Amiga (or one with even more memory than that), then pressing F4 on the menu screen will get you straight into Air Ace II. If you've only got the standard 512K, then click on the left mouse button first to blank the screen, then press F4. Ignore the error message which will appear on the screen after a few seconds (it's trying to tell you – albeit rather cryptically – that it can't load an extra intro screen which only appears on the expanded machines) and wait for a few more seconds until the 'press fire to play' message comes up.

Big scores await in *Air Ace II*, the trick is knowing what's worth shooting.

Fans of *1942* and *Flying Shark* will be in heaven with this maddeningly simple vertical scroller.

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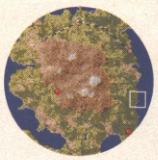
NEWS

SHOWING AT EARLS COURT 2



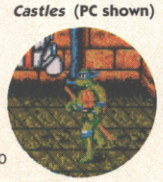
Realms

Eye Of The Storm

Populous II

Deluxe Paint IV

Castles (PC shown)



Mutant Turtles II

WORLD OF COMMODORE – THIS YEAR'S BIGGEST SHOW

14 - 17 November 1991

Commodore

With the unfortunate demise of the Computer Entertainment Show – traditionally the big end of year games showcase – as a worthwhile public event (see separate box), disappointed show-goers and industry-watchers were left at a bit of a loose end. Happily, 'were' is the operative word in the last sentence, at least as far as we're concerned – Amiga owners have the World of Commodore show at Earls Court 2 (November 15th -17th) to look forward to, which promises to be bigger and better than CES ever was, and totally Amiga dedicated too!

Of course, we're a bit biased in all this – The World Of Commodore is actually being organised by our sister magazine, Amiga Format, so it's in our interest the event's a massive success. We'll be there in force, of course – there's a giant Amiga Format stand, where AMIGA POWER will be well represented – but other things to look forward to include:

- Special guests like top snooker player Jimmy White making personal appearances – if you buy a copy of Virgin's *Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker* at the show, chances are he'll be there to sign it!
- Gremlin running a *Lotus Turbo Challenge II* competition throughout the show, with some amazing prizes to be won – including a CDTV.
- Conferences, demonstrations and panels to attend throughout the three public days, with top games publishers showing off their products, developers explaining how they were put together, and (it is rumoured) even the AMIGA POWER team leaving themselves open to the most (ahem) intimate questioning!
- Electronic Arts, who are bound to be heavily pushing Argonaut's long awaited flight sim *Birds of Prey*. It's been four years in development – can it really be good enough to justify such a wait? Here's your chance to find out! (And don't forget they'll have such major-league products as Bullfrog's *Populous II* and the US sourced sort-of god-sim, *Castles*, on show too, not to mention their amazing new graphics package, *Deluxe Paint IV*).
- Hundreds of other games publishers demonstrating the best of their new games, including Ocean (the incredible 3D *RoboCop III*), Entertainment International (*Eye of the Storm*), Virgin (*Realms*), Mirrorsoft (*Turtles II*), Psygnosis (*Agony*), MicroProse (*MicroProse Golf*), Mindscape (*Paperboy II*) and many (many) more. Don't buy a big Christmas release until you've had a chance to check it out in person at the World Of Commodore show!
- Lots of techie, non-games products on display too, showing you how to make the most out of your Amiga! There'll be hundreds of stands where you can buy just about every game under the sun, plus check out the best in graphics, sound, and video equipment. Whatever you're looking for, you're bound to find a bargain in there somewhere.

It all sounds too good to be true, doesn't it? So what are the details? Well, the World Of Commodore show is being sponsored by Future Publishing, the people behind AMIGA POWER, Amiga Shopper and Amiga Format, not to mention C64 mag Commodore Format, (as we've already drummed into you about a million times), as well as Commodore themselves. It's reckoned that 35,000 people will show up over the three days (although that is a conservative estimate). Doors are open from 9am to 5.50pm on November 15-16 and 9am to 4pm on November 17, while tickets are priced at £6.00 for adults, £4.00 for under 14s (or £4.95 for adults and £2.95 for under 14s if bought in advance from the Ticket Hotline on 051 356 5085). And there you have it! Go, why don't you?

OH DEAR! WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE CES?

EMAP Exhibitions' Computer Entertainment Show was to have been the biggest and best game show yet, but a lack of enthusiasm for it among software houses has meant it shrank and shrank until last month it was decided to turn it into a dull, trade only event. Anyone who had been planning to go should have been warned about the cancellation well in advance through press and radio advertising.

Disappointed show organiser Neil Wood had this to say about software publishers' unwillingness to spend money on big stands. "If people don't want to take the opportunities that's up to them. We can't drag them in kicking and screaming." In actual fact, the writing has been on the wall for CES for some time, with the event seeming getting smaller and less impressive each year. Yes, the recession has to be blames in part at least, but it seems many people seeing the timing as being a significant contributing factor too – September being simply too early for what's meant to be a major pre-Christmas show.

THE MOST HATED MAN IN BRITAIN?

Jimmy Hill – the man with his finger on the pulse and his chin on the desk.

Could this be the worst ever character licence for a computer game? Jimmy Hill, the BBC's loathsome soccer analyst (well, we asked all our local footie experts, and none of them liked him) is to appear in *Match Of The Day*, yet another 'definitive' strategy management affair courtesy of Impulze, the full price side of Houghton-Le-Spring's Zeppelin Games. Press reports and the dubious opinions of people like Hill will shape the fortune of the game's players and teams. According to Zeppelin it will feature "all the things that you associate with the sporting media". *Match Of The Day* will be kicking off next month for £25.99.

OH NO – THEY'RE BACK! IT'S TURTLES II

After last year's nightmare *Turtles* game – one of the most obviously hopeless cash-ins in history – Mirrorsoft are anxious to improve their image with this conversion of the popular four-player beat-'em-up coin-op *Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles*. As these early shots show, they certainly seem to have the look right, and though it's too early to say how it's going to turn out, if it's only mediocre it'll still be a good 50 times better than the previous effort. Turtle-mania may have died down since last Christmas – when the first game made number one – but you still have to fancy Mirrorsoft's chances this time around. Judgement day is a mere month away.

***Turtles II*: Should be better than the last effort, but have these funny little ninja thingies seen better days?**

ROLE PLAYING WAR SET TO BREAK OUT

We hear that *Corporation* programmer Kevin Bulmer is working on a new role playing game of gargantuan proportions. It hasn't been named yet (though its provisional name is *Dragon's Realm*), but we do know that it'll be utilising the latest graphics techniques to give first-person perspective with some marvellous texture mapping touches. Publisher US Gold won't say a word about this one, except that it'll "knock the socks of *Ultima VII*" (bear in mind that *Ultima VI* isn't even available on the Amiga yet)! ETA is Easter 1992 though, so don't hold your breath...

CARD BORED

Mmmmm. Weird widget of the month must be the *Silverbird Keyboard Overlay*. It's a bit of cardboard which you (ahem) lay over your keyboard, allowing you to write stroke-key shortcuts for games like flight sims in the spaces provided. They're sold in packs of five costing £6.80, and could prove most useful if complicated games with lots of controls are your thang. Call Silverbird on 05255 2614.

BARGAINS AHOY!

Another happy bunch of (ahem) 'mature' games are to be re-released at budget prices by Electronic Arts' low cost label Star Performers. Who can complain though when they're as good as these? Heading the list is Bullfrog's evergreen *Populous*, a real steal at £10.99, along with Gremlin's shoot-'em-up *Magic Fly*, *Match Pairs* and *The Immortal* at the same price and the only recently released *Ski Or Die* at a mere £7.99. That last may have had only a luke warm reaction in the first issue of AP, but it's ideal budgie fare.

PHAZERS TO STUN

10 TROJAN PHAZER LIGHT GUNS TO GIVE AWAY

You may remember a version of this, erm, 'weapon' from Sinclair Magnum light gun days. Well now it's back, slightly redesigned, with a new selection of games, and compatible for your Amiga! Okay, so it might not be the most sophisticated add-on around (what d'you expect for £40?), but it's a whole lot more fun than grappling with a mouse or joystick for the vast majority of those first person perspective shoot-'em-ups – and it allows you to do a mean gangster impression too! There's a full review starting on page 80 this issue, but first – the competition!

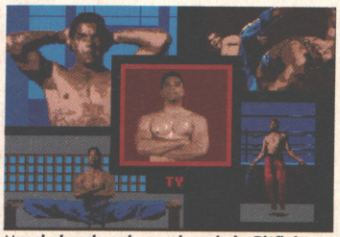
We're giving away ten (TEN!) gun packs, each containing the shooter plus two Trojan compatible games, *Orbital Destroyer* and *Skeet Shoot*. To win just answer these three killin' questions:

1) What sort of gun does James Bond use?
2) Dirty Harry?
3) Big Arnie Schwarzenegger?

COMPETITION

Just scribble your answers onto the back of a postcard, and fire it off to us at: **AMIGA POWER TROJAN COMPETITION, 29 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon, BA1 2BW.**

FIGHTING TALK



Muscle heads only need apply in *Pitfighter*.

You'll recognise this one – at least, the coin-op freaks amongst you will. It's *Pitfighter*, Domark's latest rough and tumble release, due to arrive in the early winter and aimed directly at the potential bezerkers amongst you. Programming team Teque London have spent the last few months grappling with this conversion of Tengen's muscle-headed beat-'em-up – it's the one with the distinctive digitised pictures of real wrestlers rather than normal sprites. Not surprisingly, the game has a very unusual (and rather spectacular) look, but that's not where the differences end – there are four fighters on screen at any one time, for instance, (two or three being computer controlled), while some nifty zoom camera work makes sure all four are visible at any one time, no matter how near together or far apart they are. A boasted 54 combat moves and 1,200 frames of animation help make it potentially the most successful Tengen conversion there's been to date.

One of Teque's more difficult tasks is to get the digitised sprites of the three main fighters (ie the ones you can chose to control) working convincingly in the game's pseudo-3D – quite a tricky task even on the Amiga. You'll be able to see how well they've done it when *Pitfighter* jumps into the arena in November, priced at £24.99.

SUPER SPACE INVADERS '91

Oh no (it's Trevor). The Invaders are back!

A-ha! Now here's a coin-op conversion really worth watching out for – the nostalgia freaks amongst you are probably chomping at the bit already. The Invaders are back, bigger, badder and lots, lots madder than before. When it comes to madness though, they'd be hard pushed to match the plot of this game – it's a real lulu.

Get this: an original 1977 *Space Invaders* machine goes floating off through a space/time warp thingy, is discovered by super-intelligent aliens who turn the little digital warriors into souped-up, real-life war machines, then despatch them to Earth – on a mission to steal our cows! (Apparently there was a 1950's corn circle-style mystery involving missing cows in the States, and in some roundabout way that's where this story comes from).

Of course, what all this entertaining guff leads to is a straightforward left-right blaster with 1990s graphics, end-of-level bosses and power-ups which made it one of the grooviest coin-ops of last year. With elements of *Galaxians*, *Gyruss* and *Phoenix* thrown in for good measure, Domark's conversion looks and sounds very good indeed – but the version we saw was way too slow. Get that sorted out though – which it should be by the time you read this, and it could prove to be the best shoot-'em-up since, ooh, *R-Type II*.

CRIB SHEETS

In which we scrutinise the names behind the games. This month, it's the turn of...

No 6 MICROPROSE

Contact: Unit 1, Hampton Road Industrial Estate, Tetbury, Gloucestershire, GL8 8LD.
History: According to the story, founders Bill Stealey and Sid Meier were visiting Las Vegas while working for the US mega-corporation General Instruments, and popped into an arcade for a game of *Red Baron*. Meier, a programming whizz, reckoned he could produce a better game. Stealey, the business brain and all round military freak said,'Okay, do it – because I'm sure I could sell it if you did'. Two months later *Hellcat Ace* was launched, and with it MicroProse. That was 1982. The company's history in this country, while less impressive, is still long enough to make it an industry veteran – the European headquarters was set up in Tetbury in 1986.
People: In the UK MicroProse employs 65 full time staff, and another 30 or so part-timers. They have 25 people actually producing games here, making it perhaps the largest in-house games development team among UK based publishers.
Affiliated labels: In 1989 Prose whacked out a small fortune for British Telecom's games labels Firebird and Rainbird when Telecom closed down their leisure software operation, then, in a rather confusing move, launched two new labels in 1990, to help create a distinction between the US and UK product. Despite heavy advertising and good products on each label – *RVF Honda* on MicroStyle, and Incentive's *Dark Side* on strategy-based MicroStatus – things never really took off. Suddenly, MicroProse found themselves with five labels and nowhere near enough product to fill them. It didn't take long before Style, Status and Firebird (perceived as being too down market) were dropped, leaving a streamlined operation with the MicroProse label for the military stuff and Rainbird strategy. Rainbird is likely to be phased out next year, although Prose will continue to produce strategy product under the remaining label.
Biggest successes: Undoubtedly, their biggest game ever is *Gunship* (one million worldwide). Other biggies include *Silent Service* and *Strike Eagles I* and *II*. Rainbird's biggest hit since MicroProse ownership has been *Midwinter*.
Biggest failures: For a traditional American company with military links, many saw the launch of *Greenpeace: Rainbow Warrior* as a bit weird – boss 'Wild' Bill Stealey, it is rumoured, amongst them. The fact that the game was utter crap, and a flop, tends to justify their mystification.
Typical industry comment: Heavyweight software producers with an enviable image and long shelf lives to every product. Hard to beat when it comes to high end simulations, but on shakier ground with more arcadey titles.
Things to come: Look out for *MicroProse Golf* and the eagerly awaited dogfight sim *Knights Of The Sky*. We should also be seeing *Gunship 2000* later this year too – a real biggie.
The last word: One of the most important producers of Amiga and PC games in the world. Most 'serious' gamers will own at least one MicroProse game – it's hard to argue that they're not the best there is at what they do.

***Gunship 2000* (PC version pictured)**

RAINBOW ARTS ARE GOING MAD...

***Transatlantic*: sailing the seas of computer management**

***Fate – Gates Of Dawn*: hardly an original sounding challenge**

Trading, strategy and 3D – *Centerbase* has got the lot

Rainbow Arts have been very quiet of late (with the exception of the fairly unimpressive *Logical*), but that's set to change with the release of three rather strange new games...

Strange game number one:
Transatlantic is the sequel to the critically-popular-but-not-very-successful *Oil Imperium*, and is a business simulation set in the steamy (ahem) world of ocean liners. Up to four players can compete by fair means or foul in attempting to become the sole ruler of the waves – plus play lots of 'interlude games' and hidden movie sequences into the bargain. The game also offers the incredibly tempting opportunity to 'be the manager and employ somebody to do the non-interesting work for you' (appealing to most of us) and comes with the claim that "everyone who likes complex but easy to use simulations will be attracted by *Transatlantic*". So now you know.

Strange game number two:
Next up from the German-based software house is *Fate – Gates Of Dawn*, a fantasy role-playing game packed with all the usual kind of stuff you'd expect to find in a fantasy role-playing game (thousands of rooms to explore, complex wildernesses to roam, over 500 intelligent opponents with 'real' personalities to meet etc etc), and sets you the task of escaping from a parallel universe into which you've been cast by an evil sorcerer. Well, that'll certainly make for a nice change.

Strange game number three:
Then there's *Centerbase*, a futuristic trading and strategy game with elements of *Sim City*. Details are sketchy, but promised features include rotating 3D graphics, action sequences, a complex robot combat system, and the opportunity for up to four players to get stuck in at once. Players control a gigantic metropolis of the future, with responsibility for the wealth and happiness of its citizens – an objective which can be attained by buying, selling, spying, sabotage, and using other 'subversive' tactics, adding an extra degree of megalomaniac fun to the already-compelling *Sim City* gameplay. We're really looking forward to this one, which, like the others, should be released within the month.

ROCK HARD QUIZ

Compiled by Gary Penn

Welcome to the quiz that's hard. Harder than 'Sorry' or 'Chicago's habit' or 'Bryan Ferry's Rain That's Gonna Fall'. Harder even than the Pet Shop Boys. But not as hard, it must be said, as anyone capable of correctly answering the following five crossword-style questions AND identifying the link between them. So what are you gawping at? Jump to it...

The Questions

1. Bleached James' sport is in a spin.
2. The Assembly Line's fairground attraction.
3. Bawl, Liz! A breakdown would be the sensible solution.
4. Screech to a halt? Not likely! It's turned into more than a passing interest.
5. Stone me! It's insanity!

The answers are on page 14.

Oh dear...

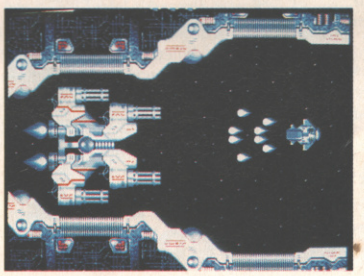
The column that's got the whole industry in tears.

No6 CRAZY CARS (Titus)

***Crazy Cars*: crazy in the sense that anybody who enjoys it must be clinically insane**

We wouldn't say this game has incredibly duff graphics, but it has. We wouldn't say that if this game was a film, it would be *Plan 9 From Outer Space*, but it would. We wouldn't say that the design of this game makes *Rambo* look deep and intellectual, but it does. We wouldn't say that the sound in this game is a horrible series of irritating drones, but it is. We wouldn't say that this game has the level of challenging and exacting difficulty of falling off a log covered in engine grease which was rolling down a ski-slope, but it has. We wouldn't say that this game is unbelievably repetitive, but it is. We wouldn't say that this game would make the designers of the Amiga commit suicide if they saw what the machine they're so proud of is being used for, but it would. We wouldn't say that this game's had as much imagination, effort and care put into it as your average Jason Donovan album, but it has. We wouldn't say that the way your car bounces into the air when it collides with anything is the most stupidly ridiculous-looking concept ever seen in a driving game, but it is. We wouldn't say that this game single-handedly put the development of Amiga software back by at least a year – simply by showing companies that you could make money out of any old rubbish – but it did. We wouldn't say that the pretty front end and 'Game Over' screens in this game are like draping a print of the Mona Lisa over a freshly-butchered cow's entrails, but they are. We wouldn't say that being... (*Snip! -Ed*).

KILL EVERYTHING TIME (PART 356)



***Cardiaxx*: Faster than *R-Type II*?**

Sideways scrollers fans watch out – Electronic Zoo are preparing a frenzied space blast-'em-all from the *R-Type*-cum-*Defender* school of inter-galactic gunplay. *Cardiaxx* is claimed to be "the fastest scrolling shoot-'em-up ever" and features five levels teeming with laser fodder. It'll feature some neat digitised speech (reputedly samples culled from classic actioners like *Terminator* and *Aliens*), plenty of bolt-on weaponry, and the usual parade of end-level guardians. *Cardiaxx* should be here within the month.

(And don't forget *Son Of Zeus* either – a Greek mythology inspired fantasy arcade romp imminent from the Zoo. You view a world of monsters, spells and swords through first person perspective for the travelling bits, followed by sidewards viewed beat-'em-up screens featuring the usual Mount Olympus crowd, from Hydras to Cyclops to... giant lobsters? Hopefully all will be explained in time...)

***Son of Zeus*: Loadsamonsters.**

WANTED

BRAVE ADVENTURERS

NO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE NECESSARY

If you've ever pictured yourself as a Brave Adventurer but have been put off by the complexity of Role Playing Adventures this is the game for you.

Shadow Sorcerer has all the excitement and intrigue of AD&D®'s more complex adventures and also features the following "gamer friendly" innovations:

Shadow Sorcerer

- *100% "point 'n' click" icon control (no laborious typing).*
- *3D isometric play area giving you more control on the playing environment.*
- *Control up to 4 characters in a life or death struggle against evil.*
- *Hexagonal grid map aids strategic planning.*
- *Combat action adventure.*

This new concept in role playing adventures means that in minutes you could be confronting the Shadow Sorcerer, the down side is that within minutes you could also be dead!!

Screen shots from Atari ST version.

Screen shots are only intended to be illustrative of the game play and not the screen graphics which vary considerably between different formats in quality and appearance and are subject to the computers specifications.

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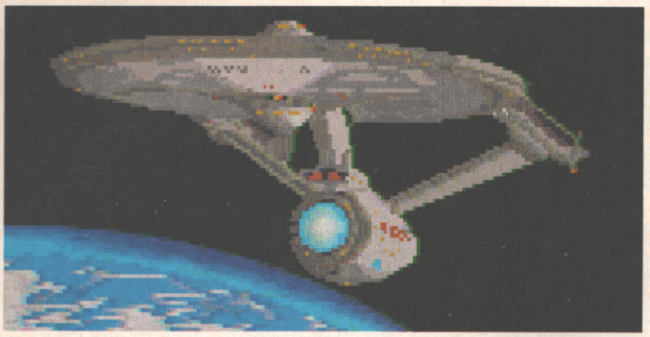


BOLDLY GOING

Everybody loves *Star Trek* because it's, well, so darned loveable. Good news then that an Amiga game, based on the voyages of our chums on the Enterprise, is warp nine-ing its way towards these shores even as we speak (which should mean it'll be here by about tea time).

Electronic Arts will be doing the publishing bit, but it's Californian coders Interplay (the people behind *Battlechess*, *The Bard's Tale* series and the forthcoming *Castles*) who've taken care of developing the game. Details are about as forthcoming as a Klingon peace mission, but we're given to understand that *Star Trek: the 25th Anniversary* will draw heavily from the fab TV show (as opposed to the slightly less than fab movies). An EA spokeswoman offered: "It's a giant 3D galactic exploration game with plenty of role playing elements to it."

Star Trek, seen by many as the perfect subject for a game, has not had a good time of it on the Amiga. Some years ago Telecomsoft (better known by the names of their labels, Firebird and Rainbird) came up with a long overdue game for the ST – it was okayish, but never deemed good enough to be ported across to the Amiga. Then there are the PD versions, of course – oodles of them have appeared, at various different times, usually with a ship management theme. Some are good (in fact, some are great) but there's not really been enough to them to do justice to the, well, 'legend,' that is *Star Trek*. Chances are, then, that this'll be the first version to be really worth waiting for – and it shouldn't take too long a wait either. Current reports have it that it'll be docking sometime in December.

BETTER THE DEMON YOU KNOW...

Demonware, best known for their cutesy arcade games (*PP Hammer*, *The Power* et al), are working on two rather more ambitious projects – a large scale strategy monster-game, and a weird B-movie type graphic adventure. They are:

Starlight Voyage

At the moment that's just the working title for this giant space epic (which seems to have taken its plot lock, stock and barrel from tacky TV show *Battlestar Galactica*). The game itself is a strategy affair, much of it built around a series of pretty control screens. You have to choose the personalities and physical and mental abilities of the space pilots who protect your main craft in their small fighter ships, then (shades of *Deuteros* here) build the ships themselves from collected raw materials. It's not all fighting though – yes, you can sit in the hot seat of one of the fighters for the epic battle scenes if you want to, but equally you'll find you're spending a lot of your time communicating with any aliens you may come across (they come in both hostile and friendly varieties) and doing similar managerial-type things. The game's all in German at the moment, so judging just how good it is has proved a bit tricky so far – look out for an English version around October.

The Mind-Possessing Aliens From Hyperspace

Great title! Moving even further upmarket and a couple of weeks further away, *The Mind-Possessing Aliens From Hyperspace* is a 'B'-movie influenced and art deco-styled graphic adventure. Mad Doctor Von Stahl has discovered a way to send people into hyperspace – what he hasn't worked out yet is how to get them back (!), or, for that matter, how to combat the hordes of hyperspace-dwelling monsters who are flooding through the opening he's created and taking over people's minds left, right and centre! Imagine *Invasion Of The Body Snatchers* presented in a *Dungeon Master* style and you'll be half way there

All interesting stuff, and quite a change from the sort of thing we've come to normally expect from Demonware. Fans of their more typical offerings will perhaps prefer the next two releases on their more arcade-based Kaiko label – *Super Daryna*, a 2,000 screen cuddly *Gauntlet* variant, and (yes!) *Gem'X II*! Look for them some time around November.

AMIGA POWER ROCK HARD QUIZ
THE ANSWERS

1. *Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker*
2. *Helter Skelter.*
3. *Wizball*
4. *Kick Off*
5. *Marble Madness*

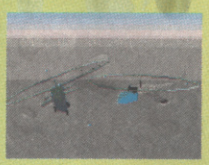
The connection is this – ball control is the key to playing all five.

AMIGA POWER RECOMMENDS

Our no-nonsense guide to the best of the recent releases – budgies finally getting a look-in too.

MEGA LO MANIA (Image Works)

Coming your way any day now, *Mega lo Mania* has been one of the most eagerly-awaited games of the year. Almost arcadey in some ways – particularly in its incredible addictive qualities – this is a strategist's dream game, with a difference, the fast pace giving zap junkies a thrill too. And of course, the excellent presentation (particularly the use of sampled voices) will keep everybody entertained.

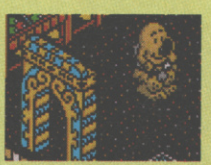


THUNDERHAWK (Core Design)

A flight sim only in as much as that it simulates flight, Core's game is more of an action-packed shoot-'em-up than you might expect – in fact, beneath the flash 3D graphics, you could argue that it simply IS an action-packed shoot-'em-up, full stop. Lovely graphics and sound added to accessible control make this the perfect flying game for people who hate flying games. Pity about the £30 price tag though.

BLADE WARRIOR (Image Works)

'AMIGA POWER Recommends' that you take a look at this one, at least. While *Blade Warrior*'s powers of lastability have a shadow of doubt over them, what isn't in question is that this is one of the most strikingly atmospheric games ever seen on the Amiga. Breathtaking graphics in a unique silhouette style allow the player's imagination to run riot. Not for everyone, but see it before you decide.



HEAD OVER HEELS (The Hit Squad)

Among older game players there are many who'll tell you that this 8-bit classic is the best computer game ever, and with an unprecedented 92 percent rating in the last issue, it looks like we might agree with them. Don't trust your eyes – fork out eight quid (eight quid! It's nothing!) on *Head Over Heels* and experience a game so good you'll probably cry.

SARAKON (Leisure Genius)

Okay, let's see if, just once, we can talk about *Sarakon* without mentioning *Shanghai*. Damn, blown it already. There's no escaping the debt that this game owes to that classic *Mah Jong*-inspired puzzler, but *Sarakon* adds enough twists of its own to be well worth owning even if you've got the original. A word of warning though – don't start to play it if you've got anywhere important to go in the same week.

STACK UP (Zeppelin)

Since the phenomenal triumph that was *Tetris*, software houses have churned out abstract puzzle games by the lorryload in a search for a suitable successor. That this unassuming little budget game should turn out to be the closest thing to a true sequel, then, comes as quite a surprise. The best game in the genre since Demonware's forgotten classic *Gem'X*, and at £7.99 you've got no excuse for not owning it.

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

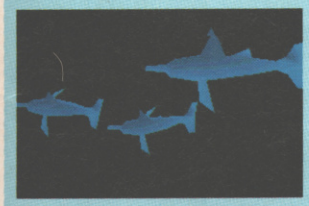
Yes that's right, 'top' Basildon software moguls Empire have a whole slew of thrilling-looking games lined up for the coming months. lots of interesting stuff, but top of the list must surely be...

DEATHBRINGER

Empire's *Deathbringer*: lots of fighting, monsters and, erm, death

The much-previewed *Deathbringer* is edging steadily closer to completion, as this shot of one of the end-of-level baddies shows, but other 'products in the pipeline' (as they say in the biz) includes the interestingly-titled *Space 1889*, a mystery role-playing adventure based on the Games Workshop RPG of the same name. Enemies include corrupt German conspirators and radical Martian religious cults, taking the game into new realms of double xenophobia. The whole thing promises to be different if nothing else – the idea of Victorian space ships has always gone down a treat with us anyway. More details as we get them.

EYE OF THE STORM



***Storm*: whale-based space creatures**

But wait, there's more. The Next Big Thing in Amiga graphics, Gouraud shading (a technique which increases realism by blurring the boundaries between filled areas of polygons), features heavily in *Eye Of The Storm*, a game set on Jupiter and starring the player as a scientist attempting to gain control of a section of the giant gas planet where life has just been discovered. The game itself plays like a cross between *Elite* and *Warhead*, with loads of flying around, shooting competitors, blasting (or indeed protecting – free will operates here) the alien space creatures and buying more and more flashy kit for your spaceship. Other features include functional plants, animals and large immobile bladders of protoplasm, all scattered over a playing area roughly equivalent to the entire surface area of the Earth! We can't speculate much at this stage, but the list of technical achievements alone sounds pretty impressive, as do the credentials of the men behind the project – they're the same lot who brought us the rather similar *Starglider II*. This could easily be Empire's biggest yet, certainly on 16-bit.

***Storm*'s impressive Gouraud shading**

TWILIGHT 2000

This'll make you laugh. You thought the Cold War was over, you thought the walls (metaphorical and physical) of Communism had tumbled everywhere in the world, and you thought that a new age of detente had dawned, with arms limitation and reduction agreements being signed at every turn. Not so! Empire know better. We'll let them explain themselves...

"*Twilight 2000* thrusts you into a dark but realistic vision of the aftermath of World War III. Radiation, famine and disease are rampant. The only luxury is survival itself. The year is 2000..." Yup, it's *Twilight 2000*, another yawn-along-a-armageddon role-playing war sim thing set in a devastated Poland and playing somewhere along the lines of *Battle Command* and *Armour-Geddon*. If you can forgive the rather outdated excuse for a plot, this could actually be quite an entertaining strategy epic – even if we do get the impression that a quick storyline re-write could make all the difference to its chances.

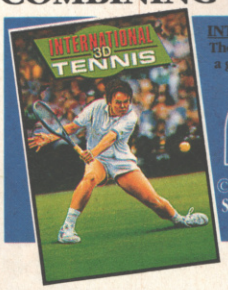
VOLFIED

Before all that though comes Volfied, the conversion of Taito's coin-op follow-up to the classic *Qix*. We don't know quite what's taking this one so long, but Empire promise it's coming soon, and if the C64 version is anything to go by, it ought to be a corker. Look for a full review next month (with a bit of luck).

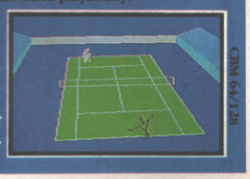
4 FANTASTIC SIMULATIONS IN ONE GREAT PACK

SUPER SIM PACK

COMBINING THE VERY BEST IN



INTERNATIONAL 3D TENNIS
The innovative use of vector graphics has created a game with unrivalled playability.



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TENNIS

CRAZY CARS II
At last the amazing follow-up to one of the most successful games ever!

©Titus 1988, 1989.

DRIVING

*ITALY 1990 WINNERS EDITION
Recreate the excitement of the world cup. Authentic Game Action · Take Your Team To The Finals · Unique Playing Features

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SOCCER

AIRBORNE RANGER™
Danger and suspense behind enemy lines.

MICRO PROSE
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AND AIRBORNE ACTION

Available on:
Amstrad & CBM 64/128 cassette & disk, Spectrum cassette, Atari ST, Amiga and PC & Compatibles

(3D Tennis is replaced by Heavy Metal on PC version)

U.S. GOLD®

*Italy 1990 Winners Edition Programme.

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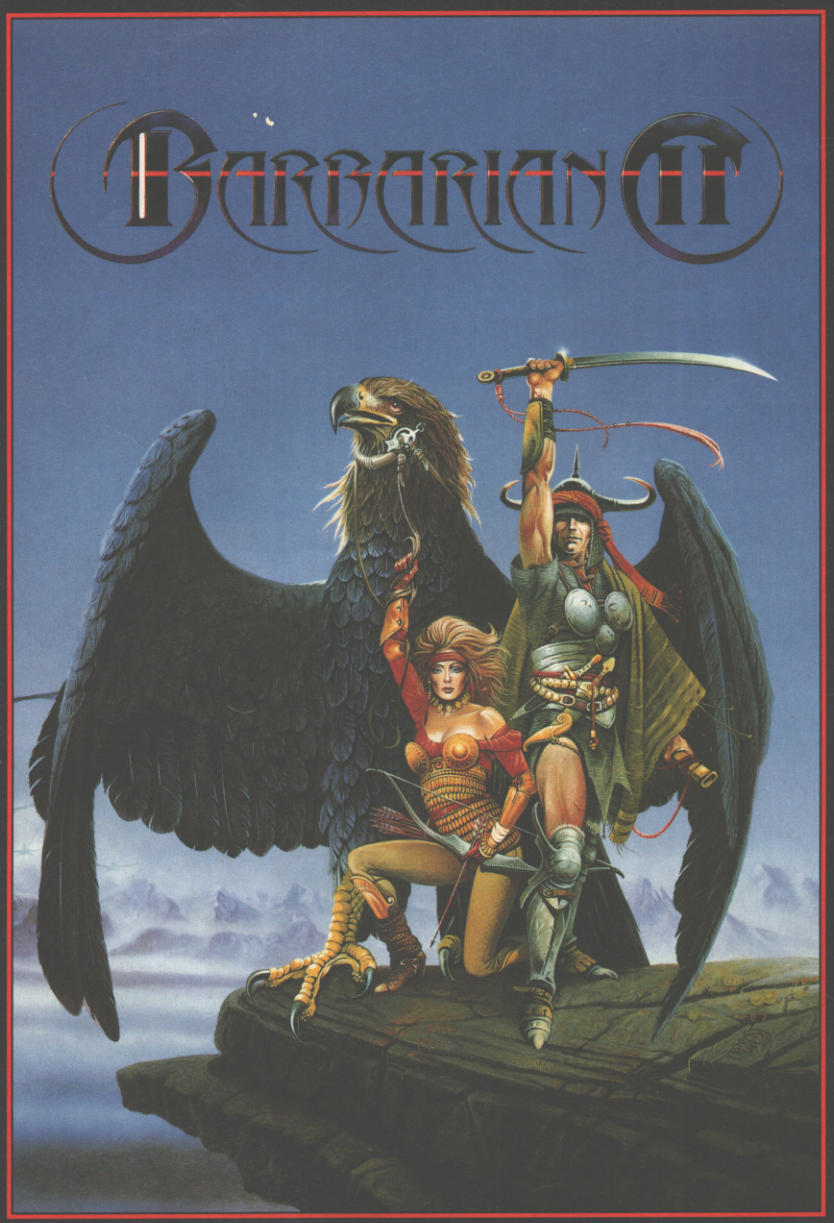
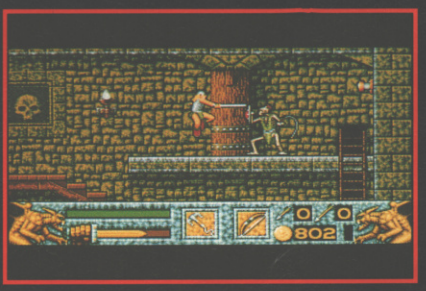
Screen shots are only intended to be illustrative of the gameplay and not the screen graphics which vary considerable between different formats in quality and appearence and are subject to the computers specification.

BARBARIAN II





BARBARIAN II

Necron's back in town and he wants revenge. Only you – in the guise of Hegor the Barbarian – have the courage, strength and stupidity to face the challenge:

It's time once again to don your dented helmet, tie your sweaty breechcloth, sharpen your rusting sword and move your big feet in the direction of danger.

Forests, caves, dungeons, castles and temples await your barbaric exploration, each is infested with deadly inhabitants and devious traps ready to terminate your lowbrow activities.

Featuring 2,000 frames of sprite animation, 32 colours on-screen, parallax scrolling, 6 levels of continuous arcade/adventure action, over 1 megabyte of fully-animated sprites, 50 divergent enemies, Magic & Health Potions to help you on your quest and a plethora of unique weapons to find and use. **Barbarian II** is:

The ultimate in loincloth entertainment.

Screen Shots from the Amiga version

SEEING IS BELIEVING

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LICENCES ABOUND

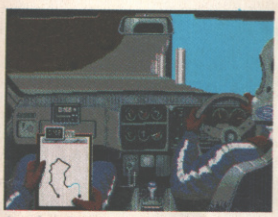
Whether it started life as a coin-op, movie, TV show or even board game, licensed products are once again splattering themselves all over the chart, particularly the bottom end. *Manchester United*,

Ocean's *Toki* – excellent conversion slowly climbing up the chart.

the budget *Lombard RAC Rally* and Ocean France's excellent conversion of little known coin-op *Toki* lead the pack, but down at the bottom end The Hit Squad's relentless schedule of movie tie-ins and old coin-ops are everywhere.

ATTACK OF THE BUDGIES

Good old budget games are out in force this month with an almost unprecedented 59 low-costers packing out the top 100. Original cheapos like Code Masters' *Fantasy World Dizzy* and *Full Contact* from Team 17 have made a good showing for themselves, taking up 13 slots. But it's with re-releases that the real action is – no less than 39 titles are back in the charts as budget games, headed by *RAC Lombard Rally*, and *Xenon II*, both of which have enjoyed lengthy runs.



***Lombard RAC* – back on budget.**

Compilations aren't as prolific as in summer's gone by, but the best buys must be *Populous/Sim City* from Infogrames, and Ocean's *Rainbow Collection*. Many publishers are scooping up old games into big boxes as you read this, and we reckon the current tally of four chart compilations'll double within the next two months.

North And South from Action Sixteen seems to have caught gamers' imaginations – it's been hovering around the top of the charts for four months now, which is something special for a strategy game, no matter how bizarre.

Brand new full price games

***Populous* – now bundled with *Sim City* in one superb bargain pack.**

AMIGA POWER GALLUP CHARTS

AMIGA TOP 100

***** Exceptional ***** Nearly there **** Very good *** Has its moments ** Flawed * Grim

1 (3) MANCHESTER UNITED EUROPE Krisalis £25.99 ****

2 (2) FULL CONTACT Team 17 £9.99 ***

3 (1) F-15 STRIKE EAGLE II MicroProse £29.99 *****

4 (6) THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND US Gold £29.99 *****

5 (10) FANTASY WORLD DIZZY Code Masters £6.99 ****

6 (4) LOMBARD RAC RALLY The Hit Squad £7.99 ***

7 (8) PGA TOUR GOLF Electronic Arts £25.99 *****

8 (5) XENON 2 Mirror Image £9.99 *****

9 (62) PRO BOXING Code Masters £7.99 *

10 (NE) TV SPORTS FOOTBALL Mirror Image £9.99 **

11 (9) NORTH AND SOUTH
Action Sixteen £7.99 ****

12 (7) EYE OF THE BEHOLDER
US Gold £30.99 *****

13 (11) LEMMINGS Psygnosis £25.55 *****

14 (16) LITTLE PUFF IN DRAGONLAND
Code Masters £6.99 **

15 (17) NINJA RABBITS Micro Value £6.99

16 (12) DEFENDER OF THE CROWN
Mirror Image £9.99 ***

17 (13) MIAMI CHASE
Code Masters £7.99 ****

18 (15) 3D POOL Mirror Image £9.99 ****

19 (27) TREASURE ISLAND DIZZY
Code Masters £4.99 ****

20 (25) TOKI Ocean £24.99 *****

21 (21) WATERLOO Mirror Image £9.99 **

22 (25) SWITCHBLADE 2 Gremlin £25.99 *****

23 (NE) RUN THE GAUNTLET
Hit Squad £7.99 *

24 (10) HERO QUEST
Gremlin Graphics £25.99 ****

25 (24) GODS Renegade £25.53 *****

26 (19) ARMOUR-GEDDON
Psygnosis £25.99 ****

27 (37) WORLD CLASS LEADERBOARD
Kixx £7.99 *****

28 (43) R-TYPE Hit Squad £7.99 *****

29 (33) ROCKET RANGER
Mirror Image £9.99 ****

30 (30) CARRIER COMMAND
Mirror Image £9.99 *****

31 (NE) THE GAMES: SUMMER EDITION
Kixx £7.99 **

32 (29) LIFE & DEATH
Mindscape £25.53 ***

33 (26) RAILROAD TYCOON
MicroProse £34.99 ****

34 (NE) RAINBOW COLLECTION
Ocean £29.99 *****

35 (37) CHUCK ROCK
Core Design £25.53 *****

36 (86) ZAK McKRAKEN US Gold £24.95 **

37 (42) CJ'S ELEPHANT ANTICS
Code Masters £6.99 **

38 (88) CLASSIC 4 Energize £6.99 **

39 (31) CALIFORNIA GAMES Kixx £7.99 **

40 (45) SUPERCARS 2
Gremlin Graphics £19.99 ***

41 (19) KICK OFF – WINNING TACTICS
Anco £12.99

42 (23) RAMBO III Hit Squad £7.99 *

43 (70) OUT RUN Klassix £7.99 *

44 (40) VIOLATOR Code Masters £7.99 ***

45 (52) SIM CITY / POPULOUS
Infogrames £29.99 *****

46 (NE) WINGS OF FURY Domark £9.99 ***

47 (75) POWER UP Ocean £29.99 ****

48 (21) INTERNATIONAL KARATE +
Hit Squad £7.99 *****

49 (81) F/A-18 INTERCEPTOR
Electronic Arts £10.99 ****

50 (35) THREE STOOGES
Mirror Image £9.99 **

51 (56) SPIRIT OF EXCALIBUR
Virgin Games £29.99 **

52 (NE) SECRET OF THE SILVER BLADES
US Gold £29.99

53 (NE) BEACH VOLLEY Hit Squad £7.99 *

54 (61) OPERATION WOLF
Hit Squad £7.99 ****

55 (36) SPEEDBALL 2 Mirrorsoft £24.99 *****

56 (53) SPEEDBALL Mirror Image £9.99 *****

57 (NE) NAVY SEALS Ocean £24.99 ***

58 (NE) DUNGEONS... AND EVERYTHIN'
Atlantis £6.99 *

59 (87) PREDATOR Hit Squad £7.99 ***

60 (83) DALEY THOMPSON Hit Squad £7.99 **

61 (51) SUPER HANG-ON
Hit Squad £7.99 ****

62 (63) CENTURION Electronic Arts £25.99 ***

63 (60) FINAL WHISTLE Anco £12.99 ****

64 (NE) IMPOSSAMOLE GBH £7.99 *

65 (84) MOONWALKER Kixx £7.99 *

66 (49) 3D CONSTRUCTION KIT
Domark £49.99 ****

67 (71) FAST FOOD Code Masters £6.99 ***

68 (80) POWERMONGER
Electronic Arts £29.99 *****

69 (NE) RED HEAT Hit Squad £7.99 *

70 (NE) PREDATOR 2 Mirrorsoft £25.99 **

71 (RE) WARHEAD Activision £24.95 ****

72 (NE) CONTINENTAL CIRCUS
Mastertronic £7.99 **

73 (50) PASSING SHOT
Mirror Image £9.99 **

74 (78) AFTERBURNER Hit Squad £7.99 *

75 (38) CRICKET SIMULATOR
Soundware £24.99 *

76 (NE) PARIS DAKAR Tomahawk £7.99 *

77 (98) JAMES POND Millennium £24.99 ****

78 (59) FLOOD Electronic Arts £10.99 ****

79 (NE) SUPER LEAGUE Energize £7.99

80 (97) ESWAT US Gold £24.99 *

81 (41) KICK OFF + EXTRA TIME
Anco £7.99 *****

82 (95) TRACK SUIT MANAGER
Alternative £7.99 **

83 (54) SUPER MONACO GRAND PRIX
US Gold £25.53 ***

84 (77) EURO SUPERLEAGUE CDS £24.99 **

85 (79) ASTERIX Electronic Zoo £7.99

86 (64) LAST NINJA 2 Hit Squad £7.99 **

87 (73) PLATOON Hit Squad £7.99 ***

88 (72) DOUBLE DRAGON
Mastertronic £9.99 *

89 (39) MEGA TRAVELLER 1
Empire £29.99 *****

90 (55) BRAT Image Works £25.99 ***

91 (RE) EYE OF HORUS Millennium £24.99 **

92 (32) STREET FIGHTER Kixx £9.99 *

93 (40) MERCS US Gold £25.99 ***

94 (58) NEUROMANCER
Electronic Arts £25.99 **

95 (47) LINE OF FIRE US Gold £24.99 **

96 (RE) INDY 500 Electronic Arts £24.99 *****

97 (57) PANZA KICK BOXING US Gold £24.99

98 (RE) SILKWORM Mastertronic £6.99

99 (67) ADVANCED FRUIT MACHINE
Code Masters £6.99 **

100 (100) JUNGLE BOOK
Electronic Zoo £7.99 *

***Rainbow Islands* – one of three classics in the *Rainbow Collection*.**

are still desperately thin on the ground, and it's the old guard (*Lemmings*, *Toki*, *Monkey Island* et al) which are still holding strong. Mind you, with so many crackers speeding toward the shops, we expect the budgies to be taking a back seat over the coming months.

WHO'S TOP OF THE POPS?

Ocean and US Gold between them account for 32 percent of the chart (we're including budget label releases here) with Mirrorsoft coming in third place with 12 charted games. Maths fans will have worked out that the big three are taking up nearly half the chart. Other worthy mentions are Code Masters with nine games and Electronic Arts with seven. The likes of Virgin, Domark, MicroProse, Mindscape and Gremlin all have between one and five games in the charts, but most of these publishers seem to have decided to hold back all their goodies until October.

THE AMIGA POWER CHARTS: HOW THEY'RE WORKED OUT

- The Amiga Power charts are put together for us by Gallup (the folk who do the BBC pop charts among many others) based on a continuing survey of sales in a wide cross section of shops up and down the country – both independent computer stores and large chains like WH Smith. As such they're the most comprehensive charts it's possible to bring you. Doing things so comprehensively takes time, though – the chart above relates to sales during the July period.
- There's no dividing the charts into 'Budget' and 'Full Price' sections for us – we're sure you're perfectly capable of doing that for yourselves if you want to – so the list you see here includes games at every price point. This way, you can see just how important budget sales are to the overall market – at this time of year, with few big name titles being released, very important indeed.
- Each game is rated out of five stars (five red stars for the really, really excellent ones) using the same system as in The Bottom Line, to give you some idea of how good the things that are selling really are. Games which don't get any stars aren't necessarily total rubbish – they just happen to be the ones we've never really played, so can't properly comment on. Having said that though, there has to be a reason why nobody in the office has ever found it within themselves to sit down with them, hasn't there..?

TAKE COMMAND OF HARDENED SPACE CREWS, SOME ROUGH TOUGH SAILORS AND A BUNCH OF FAIRIES.

In *Hard Nova*™ you take charge of a group of space adventurers who are not only hard, but also genuinely nasty. They're the meanest mercenaries in the galaxy, willing to smuggle, assassinate and run guns. So unscrupulous, they'd sell their own granny's planet to the highest bidder.

What's more, they're armed with over 60 pieces of the most evil weaponry - hi-tech lasers, missiles, Gyro-pikes and computer automated jammers.

The crew of *StarFlight® II* may be rather less shady, but they are just as well armed. They have to be, to fight off revolting aliens as you set about exploring over 500 planets and 150 star systems. Each planet is different, some freezing, some awash with boiling lava. Starflight II is also completely open-ended, so there is no "correct way" to finish the game.

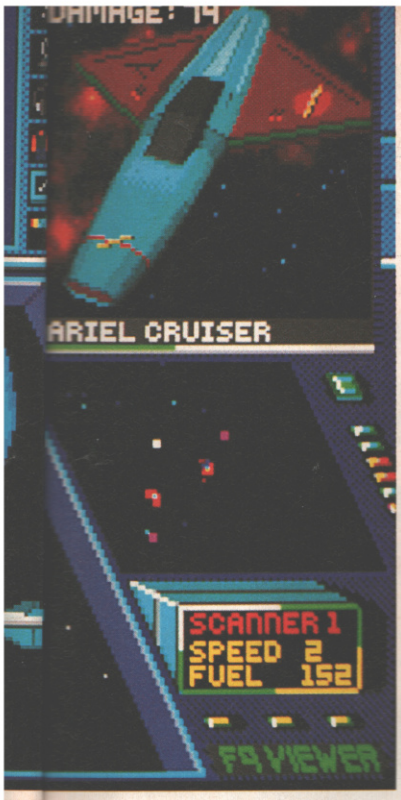
Back down to earth, or rather on the mountainous seas of the South Atlantic, in *StrikeFleet*™ you are in total command of a large task force. Your fleet consists of cruisers, destroyers, frigates, helicopters and even hydrofoils.

You are being attacked by deadly Kingfisher missiles and heavily armed attack subs and your fleet is looking to you to make split second decisions that could mean the difference between a hero's welcome and a Court Martial.

Finally, there is *Lord of the Rings*,™ J.R.R.Tolkien's epic fantasy classic, brought to weird and wonderful life by Interplay. You are Frodo and your task is to protect the one true ring from the clutches of the evil Lord Sauron.

But first, you must recruit followers from among the hobbits, dwarves and wizards to fight dangerous enemies such as orcs and trolls, evil spirits and vampires.

If you can't find these games at your favourite retailer, contact our Direct Sales Department at Electronic Arts, 11-49 Station Road, Langley, Berks SL3 8YN. Telephone 0753 549442.



Hard Nova

StarFlight II

StrikeFleet

Interplay's Lord of the Rings

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JUST WHO DO WE THINK WE ARE?

MATT BIELBY

Thrusting editor Matt Bielby landed himself in a spot of bother when he attempted a bizarre gender-transfer experiment. The youthful Yorkshire-man got his mitts on MicroProse's *Flames of Freedom*, and tried to take on the role of a female! But it all went horribly wrong when macho-man Matt was forced to kiss burly security guards in the complex strategy extravaganza.

Matt's been playing: ***Bullfrogger, R-Type II*** **and** ***The Simpsons***

GARY PENN

Gary certainly knows how to take a game apart. Take old race favourite *Indy 500*, which has enjoyed a resurrection on the top tipster's Amiga. It seems that Gary's become bored of just winning the race, now he's causing the most bloody, high speed crashes imaginable – just for fun. " I've got stupidly dangerous driving just right," he said, proudly.

Gary's been playing: ***Asteroids PD, Indy 500*** **and "loads of others"**

COLIN CAMPBELL

Colin popped off to Newquay a few weeks ago, to catch some surfing and other seaside attractions. But the buffoon ended up stuck in games arcades trying to recapture youthful victories. "I couldn't help it," he explained. "I found a great *Defender* machine, a perfectly working *1942 Midway* and an original and very loud *Galaxians*. Unfortunately, I hardly got to see the sea."

Colin's been playing: ***Silent Service II, The Enforcer*** **and (yes!)** ***International Championship Athletics***

MARK RAMSHAW

Mark's another arcade lizard who's usually to be seen smooching with a hunky *Smash TV* cabinet when out on the town. Back at home with his Amiga, our production editor and all round organiser secretly lives out squalid power fantasies with the likes of *Mega lo Mania*. Says Mark: "Real power can't be given, it must be taken." Oh dear – he thinks he's a publisher!

Mark's been playing: ***Mega lo Mania, Photon Storm*** **and** ***The Enforcer***

STUART CAMPBELL

Stuart 'hard man' Campbell has turned into a right old software softie recently. Games reviewing's very own serial killer keeps going on about the "astonishingly good quality of software coming out these days"!! Yes, our one-time hatchet-man has been sucked in by faves like *Head Over Heels* and *Rodland* – though a quick does of the hated *Kick Off II* should cure him!

Stuart's been playing: "Some good games for a change"

JONATHAN DAVIES

Our Jonathan's turned into a right old Francophile since we sent him of to the continent to investigate 'freakish software' (which the fool now insists on calling 'la tendre-porter fantastique'). Now he's been doing all the usual French things like driving on the wrong side of the road, and eating proper food. Trouble is, he wants to go to Russia next. What can he be planning?

Jonathan's been playing: ***Thunderhawk, Hunter*** **and the much-in-demand** ***Cruise For A Corpse***

RICH PELLEY

After a wee break from games reviewing, during which he popped of for a train journey around Europe, we expected Rich to return to Blighty full of bright and bouncy ideas. But no, our handsome friend is down in the dumps. Why? Well, it's our fault really. We didn't give him any of the big games to review.

Rich's been playing: The stud with lots of European girlies

MATTHEW WILLIAMS

Amiga games nut and super-art person Matt is in everybody's bad books. The treacherous louse is leaving AMIGA POWER to work for stable-mate mag Mountain Biking UK. Says Matthew: "It is with the most profound regret that I leave my good friends at AMIGA POWER..." We told him to f(snip).

Matthew's been playing: ***Terminator 2, Rodland*** **and** ***Silent Service II***

GAMES

***Cruise*: Graphic adventure at its best**

Hello and welcome to THE AMIGA GAMES REVIEW SECTION in which it really is 'all happening'. This month we're extra specially pleased with the titles on offer because, well, some of them are just so darned good. Take the extraordinary *Cruise for a Corpse*. Despite being about six months late, this GIGANTIC ADVENTURE actually manages to be ahead of its time. Wonderful graphics, mountains of gameplay and... But no, you can find out for yourself in our extensive three page review.

Storm's *Rodland* also popped in through the letterbox. and although it didn't promise a great deal in the beginning, it turns out to be TOTAL ARCADE FUN. And then there's the rather different *Silent Service II*. Now, we know that submarine games can be UNBELIEVABLY BORING, but this series of WWII battles in the Pacific can really eat up your evenings and weekends.

Others worth a look include *Robin Hood*, which has nothing to do with the movie, *Terminator 2*, which some might say has rather too much to do with the film, and (just maybe) *Flames Of Freedom*.

Don't forget that as well as our in-depth reviews of all the big name games, the back of the magazine also has the extra and shorter reviews of the also-rans and late entries, SURPRISE WINNERS, and dismal dogs. Whatever your fancy, it all starts here...

***Rodland*: Ample fun from Storm**

THE SCORING SYSTEM (AND HOW IT WORKS)

Our reviewing philosophy is simple:

1) Most magazines vastly over-rate the majority of games they review. Here at AMIGA POWER we believe in calling a spade a spade (or whatever the current expression is) so you're going to get a lot of 30, 40 and 50 per cents as well as 70s, 80s and so on. After all, if you mark everything the same, the whole concept of scoring might as well go right out the window...

2) Most magazines vastly over-complicate their rating systems too. That's why we've only got one simple mark out of 100, and that's why the Bottom Line boxes contain short 'Uppers' and 'Downers' (ie what's good and bad about the game), the summing up sentence – and nothing else. You couldn't get much more to the point – except, perhaps, with the cut-down score boxes you get towards the back of the mag, that is...

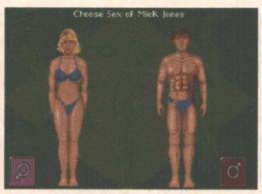
3) Most of the time we'll all agree about a game – but sometimes we won't. That's when the little On the other hand... boxes appear, somewhere for a second reviewer to put his own, possibly very different, point across.

4) That's all you need to know.

WHAT YOU'VE GOT TO DO

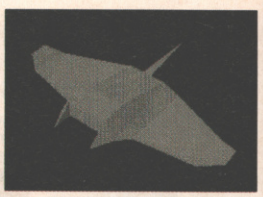
The basic plot of *Flames Of Freedom* is of a near future, post-apocalyptic war between two rival nations – calling it 'large-scale' would be to underplay it massively...

Right, let's get down to a serious game here. Here's the situ – the baddies have got control of Africa and all the green islands, while we've got the red one. And here they come to get us now...

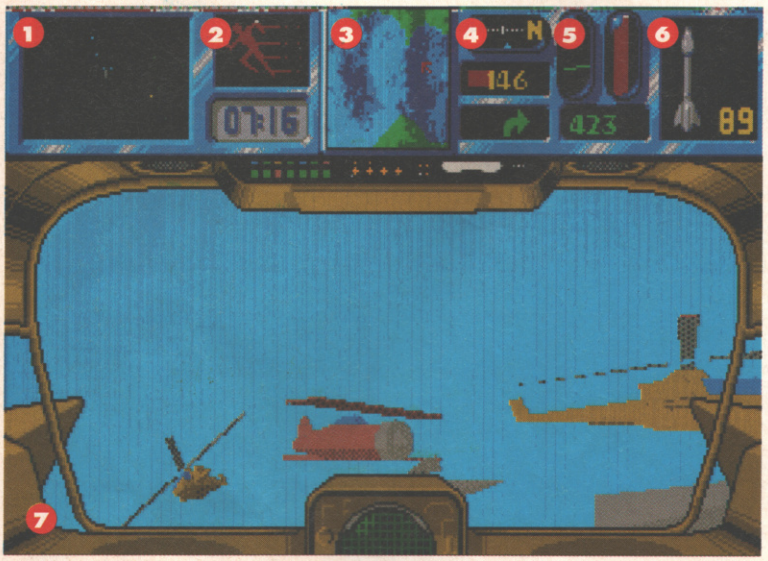


Something must be done! Enter agent Mick Jones out of ver Clash, newly retired and eager to save the world (or something).

Of course, being a world famous rocker he needs a disguise, and erm, here it is. (These character screens are great fun).



The plan is to swing some of the less committed enemy islands to our cause, building a 'wall' between us and them, but that means getting there first. A flying sub would be the coolest way...



JUST WHAT IT ALL MEANS

The icon strip across the top of the screen gives you all sorts of controls, which happily tend to work in a fairly efficient way. Here's how...

1 This scanner doobrie gives you an overall impression of what's happening around you. Various colours of dots stand for you, people on the landscape, buildings, baddie craft and so on – they're so small it can be hard to read in practice though.

2 Next up, your life gauge showing how much energy you've got left and below it (fairly obviously I guess) the time.

3 This here's a map showing you (the little arrow, pointing the direction you're going) and the islands nearby.

4 And now it gets complicated. The compass at the top is fairly obvious, but below it is your speedo (a minus number means you're going backwards) and underneath that your mouse-controlled directional arrow.

5 This little lot explains your height off the ground, rate of climb and so on – most useful when you're in something that flies or swimming/sub driving underwater.

6 While last but not least, this bit shows your weapons – it could be anything from a pistol (if you're on foot) to up to 90 (90!) or so air-to-air missiles!

7 And finally I suppose I'd better describe what's going on here. Well, this is the fire-fight option. I'm currently in the rather snazzy flying sub, being attacked by two enemy choppers and a biplane – who're all, rather conveniently, lining up in front of me waiting to get shot.

The long, long (long) awaited sequel to Mike Singleton's *Midwinter* is finally with us. It's bigger than the first game, more ambitious and

FLAMES OF FREE

...but we're assigned this crappy ship instead. Anyway, off we go...

...only to get sunk by an enemy helicopter, dammit. (It happened so fast I couldn't get a screen shot). Anyway, I swim along a bit...

...spot an enemy underwater tank thing, and head for the surface.

Hurrah! The baddie chopper's still there. Time for a quick superhuman jump...

...and I've rather unbelievably hopped straight into it! Time to take out that baddie plane and continue my journey...

irons out a number of the rough edges – but is it really any more fun to play?

Game: Midwinter 2: Flames Of Freedom
Publisher: Rainbird
Price: £34.99
Author: Mike Singleton (direction), Dave Gautrey, George Williamson, Dave Ollman, Valhermoso Franco (programming) and many others at Maelestrom
Release: Out now

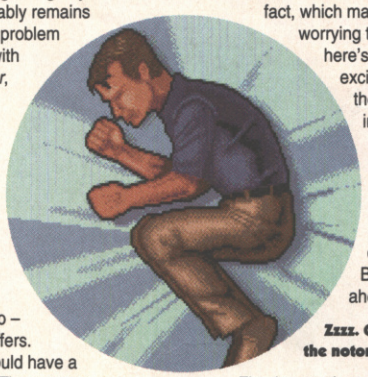
The thing about Mike Singleton games – Mike being the guy behind 8-bit classics like *Lords Of Midnight* and *Doomdark's Revenge*, as well as *War In Middle Earth* and, of course, the first *Midwinter* – is that people either love 'em or hate 'em. People who love them tend to be real strategy wargame buffs – *Lords Of Midnight* worked brilliantly as a (ahem) 'strategy experience', totally ignoring any action elements, and probably remains his best game. The problem strategy buffs find with things like *Midwinter*, with its glossy presentation, sexy front end and inclusion of action sequences, is that you tend to get bogged down in the action stuff – which isn't all that brilliant anyway as action sequences go – and the strategy suffers.

'A game that's packed with an annoying number of inconsistencies and bits that don't make sense'

Action fans would have a different complaint. They want to drive all these vehicles, meet all these people and so on – attracted by the big name and sheer polish of the game – only to find there was this unfathomable wargame thing hidden just below the surface.

Which leaves the *Midwinter* series aimed at... who? Well, a group of real Renaissance games players, I guess, people who like lots of types of game and aren't scared of something that mixes a few together. People like a lot of folk in the AMIGA POWER office in fact, which makes it rather worrying that nobody here's getting very excited at all about the 'new improved' *Midwinter, Flames Of Freedom*. In actual fact, we all find it rather dull.

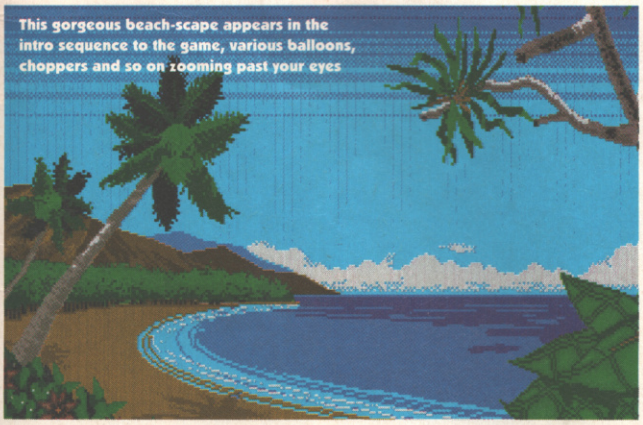
But I'm getting ahead of myself.



Zzzz. Curling up for the notorious rest option

First impressions count for a lot, and you can't fault *Flames* for presentation. The whole package feels nine tenths like some massive, high profile Hollywood blockbuster movie, one tenth like a heavyweight science fiction novel, and just generally well put together and meant – like many MicroProse games, this is something it's simply nice to own. Little things like re-occurring symbols – the twin dolphins of the Covert Operations Bureau, say – cropping up in both packaging and program help instil a real sense of faith in the game itself, a long time before you've properly played it. If so many people – they're credited, movie-like, at the end of the book – have put so much effort into making this look its best, the game itself just has to be a corker, doesn't it?

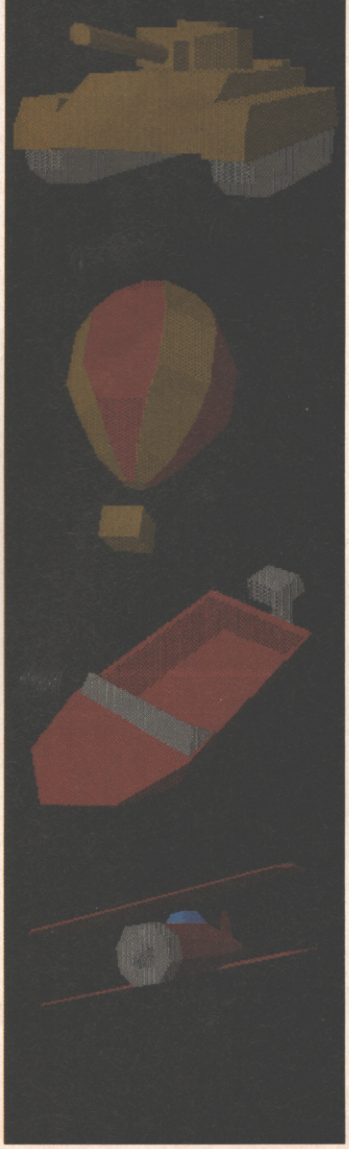
And if you manage to ignore a number of problems – which I'll get to in due course – you have to admit that yes, this is a rather impressive game. It's large scale and ambitious for sure. Like the best sequels, it takes the concept of the first game, (hopefully) puts right the things that were wrong with it, then just starts adding. And →



This gorgeous beach-scape appears in the intro sequence to the game, various balloons, choppers and so on zooming past your eyes

I GET AROUND

All over the place in fact – on land, water and in the air. And here are just some of the many ways in which I do it...



DOM

My plan here is to sleep my way around the game. First make a sexy looking character – voila! – and wack his sex appeal right up...

...then test him out on the prison escape training thingie. Davies here doesn't look like my type so I'll wait a day...

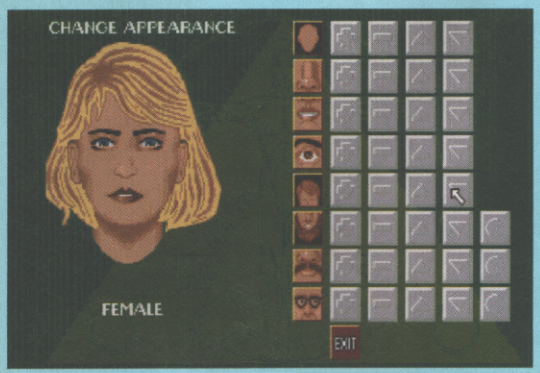
A-ha! Much more promising. she looks like she could do with some cheering up too. Time to try clicking on the lips icon...

Ha-ha! That was really easy! Feeling suitably chuffed, I swiftly dumped her and set off on a mission proper.

Here's what I'm meant to do – kill this guy. I've no intention of doing anything of the sort of course...

SUGAR AND SPICE AND ALL THINGS NICE

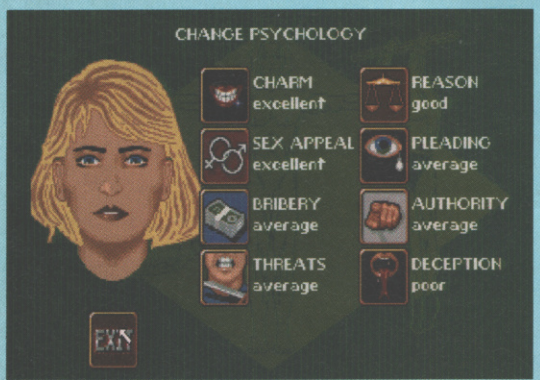
That's what little girls are made of. Or at least, they are in nursery rhymes – in *Flames Of Freedom* they're built up out of character generation screens like this one (as are all the boy characters, of course). Maelstrom have incorporated the character generating utility they used to create the game's faces into the actual gameplay itself, allowing players to come up with *really* individual characters to control...



First off, chose the face. From top down you get to cycle through a selection of face shapes, noses, mouths, eyes, hairstyles and (optional extras) beards, moustashes or glasses to build your ideal agent. You can come up with really bizarre combinations – put a beard on a girlie, say, or lipstick on a really butch bloke – or go for a fairly standard good looking character as we've got here.

Next up you get to fix your character's physical abilities. For each one you bump up a notch – reflexes, say, or endurance, another will go down a peg or two. Starting out you're best off going for a fairly average sort of character, I've found, who's just okay at everything.

Neatly, by the way, you'll notice that my new face – picked on the last screen – has appeared in smaller form on the generic female body. Time for a quick press of the exit icon...



...and it's psychology time. Everyone I've ever seen play the game has insisted on excellent sex appeal for their character – unfortunately doing this tends to knock reason down a notch or two – and indeed, playing to a few great strengths can pay off here. if you are very sexy, say, or very good at threates, using the one skill time and time again can help get you out of most sticky situations.

Anyway, there we have our character – now isn't it about time we sent her off on a mission somewhere?

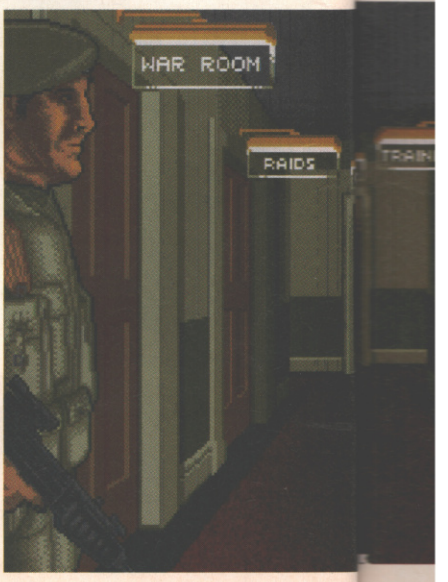
adding. And then, on top of all that, it adds some more. The playing area, number of characters depicted and range of transport and events is colossal – this is a game that promises to take months and months to complete, though thankfully it can be played in a much more actiony sort of a way too. It manages to be very friendly and entertaining looking indeed when you first pick it up – simply messing about with the character generation screens, for instance, (which allow you to change the characteristics and – yes! – facial features

'Fans of *Midwinter* will be in their element'

of the character you play) has given me some of the best fun I've had on a computer in ages.

Unfortunately though, it is – like its predecessor – a game stuck between two stools. The presentation, use of soap opera-style personalities and so on, all lead you to expect a really accessible game, one that will open up the strategy genre to, if you will, the masses.

However, its size and slowness work against it. There's simply too much running around, too much travelling, too much ground to cover and too much waiting around between screens for something to happen to please the layman. The game may have improved on the first one by 200 percent in this area, but it still isn't quick enough on its feet for

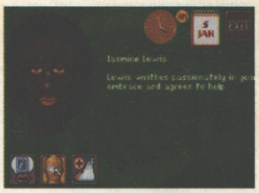


"Good luck!" the boss says. Ha – for what I'm doing luck has nothing to do with it.

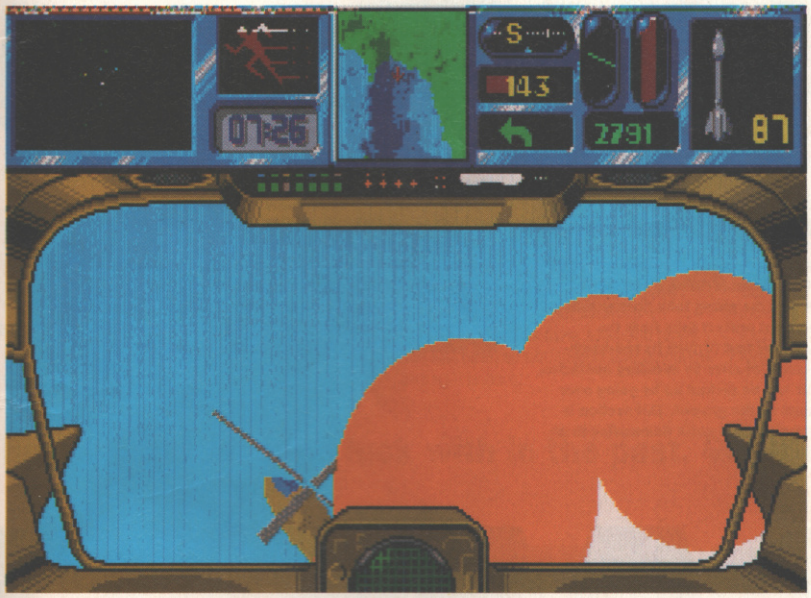
First the boring bit as I set off for a suitably babe-packed island by painfully slow boat.

Now she looks promising – if, of course, she *is* a she. It's hard to tell when everyone wears these red jumpers and blue jeans...

Hurrah! It's a chick! Bit old for me perhaps, but worth a shot still. Let's see if I can 'persuade' her....

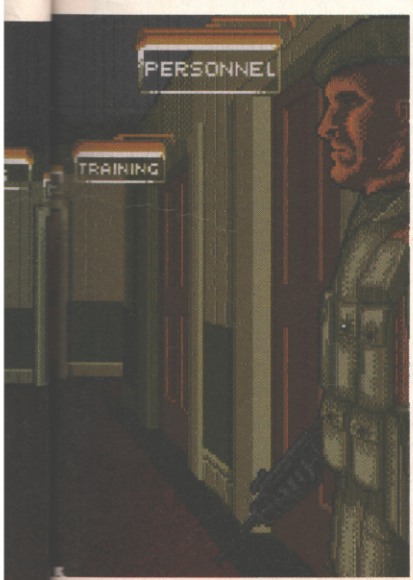


Success! Now to see if she can tell me about any other girlies there might be on the island...



Above: Enemy chopper in sight! Here we are in our flying sub, and really he's a sitting duck. I'm faster than he is and I've got 87 homing missiles left, which at this range are almost guaranteed to make a direct hit. There's only one problem – that big orange explosion to the right, which means someone's got me in *their* sights. Perhaps I'd better get rid of him first..?

Below: Here's the opening option screen, giving you various gameplay, erm, options



real mass appeal. For most of us, it's one of those tragic games that sounds like it'll be a lot more fun to play than it actually is.

It's also a game that's packed with what is, for me, an annoying number of inconsistencies, illogicalities, and bits that downright don't make sense – things that help destroy the carefully built-up feeling of reality. Here's a short list of some of the more obvious ones so you can see what I mean:

No1) I'll accept that it's a Good Thing that your character can now commandeer any available vehicles he (or she) comes into contact with (you couldn't in the first game) but it would have been much neater if this had been done with a bit more internal logic. I can just about credit that a man on foot could leap onto a moving jeep or even tank if he was nippy/lucky, but a low flying Zeppelin? Or a helicopter? I think not. (And then once he's miraculously got on board we're meant to assume... what? That the crew of this tank/helicopter/Zeppelin/ship just bail out and run away? It's not explained by the game, that's for sure).

No2) Though the date is given as 2138, in look, fashion and general 'feel' the technology level seems to be that of the present day. There are tanks and jeeps and trucks and buses and speedboats, fine, but then we get to the flying machines and things get weird. Helicopters, yes – but biplanes and Zeps?

Why's flying technology whizzed back to 1914, while everything else remains the same? And where's this bloody 'flying submarine' come from? It 'can travel across both land and sea, underwater and through the air' apparently and seems about 300 years out of synch with the rest of the game.

No 3) Even in the middle of a fire-fight, with hundreds of tanks and planes shooting at you it's possible to chose the 'rest' option – at which point you'll curl up in a little ball on the floor, and, erm, go to sleep. Now I would have thought this was most unwise – and anyway, with all that noise going on you're likely to get little kip – but apparently not.

Most of the time no-one will capture you or kill you, and you'll be able to get up refreshed in five hours time (or whatever) and continue your mission.

No 4) Most missions would be total nonsense in the real world. Here's an example: on the island of Panao you've got to recruit the daughter of the police chief (he dotes on her, and if she's with you will do his best to bring all the police over to your side), the wife of the military commandant (he hates her nagging so will bring all the army with him to prevent it) and – suddenly! – you've got a revolution. Unlikely, isn't it?

The sad truth – there're a lot more bad islands than goodies

Now it may seem churlish to complain about such things, but the game's all over the place as far as these small logical details are concerned. I can see the perfectly valid game-play reasons why some of these are there – particularly the getting into vehicles bit – but I'm not convinced there wouldn't have been a number of neater, more logical ways to cope with them all.

So what are we left with? Well, what to me is ultimately a sprawling, boring game, full of good things that don't add up to a satisfying whole. To others, it's no doubt a brilliantly challenging strategy action game, packed with lots to do and see – but these must be people with an incredible degree of patience. Fans of *Midwinter* will be in their element – they're getting more of the same, with a lot of the really tedious stuff taken out – but while it's undeniably big and epic, it also promises a lot more (certainly in terms of fun) than it delivers.

'This is a game that promises to take months and months to complete'

It's a game that would have been twice as good if there'd been fewer vehicles, a smaller number of islands, tasks that made a bit more sense and (especially) some extra wit used to spice things up along the way. (*Monkey Island* has spoiled me – I can't interact with characters are boring as these any more).

I can't help thinking that either a) the same basic plot and structure might have worked better without the 3D action element at all, but with a boost to the character interaction side, adventure game-style or b) that the 3D would work better on a smaller, tighter game – something along the lines of Activision's *Hunter*, perhaps its nearest rival. As it is, it's big and has its moments, but will, I fear, appear to many people as something too predictable, sprawling and dull.

• ***MATT BIELBY***

UPPERS There's lots and lots of it – thousands of characters, hundreds of islands, a wide selection of vehicles and oodles (and oodles) of 3D. It has to be a definite thumbs up as far as value for money is concerned, that's for sure.

DOWNERS Unfortunately, the giant strategy game structure remains too big and unwieldy, the 3D action sequences get in the way, there's far too much travelling, the character interaction gets repetitive, and it's full of odd little illogicalities.

THE BOTTOM LINE

In many ways supremely impressive, *Flames Of Freedom* will, I think, fail to work for many people. A game that's ultimately a lot less fun than it sounds.

80 PERCENT

EIGHT WAYS TO SAVE THE WORLD

The thinking person's hardman gets pixelised again for

Terminator 2 **has lifted eight sequences from the movie, and turned them into eight mini sub-games, bunged chronologically on top of each another...**

1 A quick shoot out followed by a straight beat-em-up against the baddie T1000. Really, all you need do to win this first round is press the joystick button continuously (or, to preserve effort, just hit auto-fire). The only skill involved is minimalising your own damage (indicated by the deteriorating face in the corner). This section is taken from the shopping mall wherein the two big guys from the future come face to face for the first time. The liquid metal man does a bit of his spooky shape-changing here, but it's nothing special.

2 It's onto the juggernaut chase in the flood overflow. Arnie is riding a scrambler motorbike with the young John Conner riding pillion. You must protect John from the advancing juggernaut (driven by you-know-who), and still stay alive by avoiding obstacles. Extra points can be picked up by going over bonus shapes on the ground. This section is seriously primitive but quite demanding in an entertaining kind of way.

3 Puzzle time. Failing to complete a puzzle does not mean death – this is simply a bonus screen which allows you to beef up energy ratings. Here, it's the Terminator's job to rebuild a damaged hand. This section is actually lifted from the first movie, but we won't quibble about that. It works on the same principle as one of those plastic puzzles which demand that you move pieces around until they're all in the right place. Once you've learned how to beat this in the required time, it's all very simple. Initially though, it's a tough old nut to crack. If you fail it's not a total disaster – you'll be given a 'percentage completed mark', which will determine the level of repairs that *do* get made.

TERMIN

Game: Terminator 2 – Judgment Day
Publisher: Ocean
Price: £25.99
Author: Dimentia
Release: Out now

In this very magazine, just three months ago, we ran an article talking about games based on film licences – what's good about them and where they can easily go wrong. One problem that crops up time and time again, we pointed out, is that game designers try and stick to movie scripts too closely, ending up with something that doesn't work too well as a game because it's split into too many crappy little chunks, or the plot of the film doesn't lend itself to action sequences, or whatever. As history teachers are prone to say, those who ignore the cock-ups of the past are doomed to relive them, and while *Terminator 2* isn't in the same league of awfulness as, say, games like *Ghostbusters II* or *Return Of The Jedi* games, it has managed to fall into all the classic traps which, really, you would have thought conversion specialists like Ocean would have sniffed out a long time ago.

Graphics are less cartoony than in *Total Recall* et al

'I fully expect to see this floating up to the top end of the chart pretty sharpish'

IT'S NOTHING PERSONAL, BUT...

But I'm getting ahead of myself. First of all, just what has the Amiga conversion of the year's biggest movie got to show for itself?

4 It's back to combat. This time you're in the psychiatric hospital trying to get Sarah Conner out. The T1000 has other ideas, and you must fight it out. This is exactly the same as in round one except that your opponent is stronger. Watch out for those long distance headbutts which the metal liquid man relies upon.

5 After that little scrap, your energy will probably be hovering around the zero mark, so it's time for another puzzle. This time you must repair Arnie's face (which has actually been drawn very well indeed). This screen follows the same principle as that of section three.

another computer outing – something he hasn't had too much luck with in the past. Could it be fifth time lucky, perhaps?

TERMINATOR 2 – IT'LL BE CRAP

Well, anyone who's seen the film (and I'm guessing that at least half the people reading this are abundantly familiar with Big Arnie's recent sci-fi fest) will be completely comfortable with the game. The programmers have attempted to recreate all the best action sequences inside a total of eight sub-games, and flick fans who boot this up will know exactly where they are in the story.

We all know how this works, don't we – it's a set up Ocean have used in half their games – and nearly all their film licences – from *Batman* onwards. Not only do we get a sideways scrolling shoot-'em-up, three beat-'em-ups and two driving games, but a couple of single-screen puzzlers too. You may find it all a bit formulaic and unimaginative, but it's a structure that'd still prove pretty jolly (if a little formulaic) were it not for one small problemo – all the games are crap.

'It's quite sad, really'

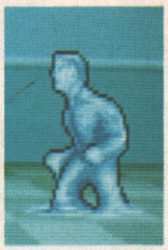
That's not to suggest for a moment that *Terminator 2* is destined to plunge into the great software incinerator, however. Far from it. I fully expect to see this floating up to the top end of the chart pretty sharpish. It's competent enough (just). It does its job (which isn't saying much). And it's got Arnold Schwarzenegger's mug on the cover (add sales of ten thousand immediately).

T1000. Yes, that's right – he looks like just, well, a bloke

The trouble is, it absolutely fails to offer anything of intrinsic value. Rather than do anything interesting with the licence, it merely manages to copy bits from lots of other games – most of which are well past their sell-by date anyway. Ocean sell 'dreams, not software' is something we hear quite a lot, and rarely has this been so abundantly and obviously true as it is here.

It's quite sad, really. The beat-'em-up sequences do not require a great deal of skill, the shooting scenes demand no skill whatsoever, and the driving games are, at best, rudimentary. Programmers Dimentia would have been a whole lot better off designing one single game – even that old warhorse, the standard horizontally scrolling shoot-'em-up a la *Rolling Thunder* – and 'Terminated' it by throwing lots of movie characters in there. Instead, they've decided to try and reproduce every action sequence from the film they could, and ended up producing a pig's dinner. Anyone who thinks they're really going to get eight good games in here for the price of one should have learned better a long time ago.

So where does that leave us? Well, for younger gamers there is enough here to justify the asking price, and, I suspect, plenty of *Terminator* freaks will ignore any derogatory reviews and go right ahead and buy the game anyway. But if you're just a gameplayer looking to make your pounds yield a good few hours of entertainment, look elsewhere. *Terminator 2* isn't for you. •*COLIN CAMPBELL*



Molten metal man does his (rather impressive) stuff

UPPERS A typical movie licence in just about every sense. It follows the plot closely, gives you a lot of sub games for your money, even provides a few digitised animations and has that face on the box...

DOWNERS ...but that's about it. There really isn't much in the way of worthwhile gameplay in here. Such a disappointment when the movie managed to confound all doubters.

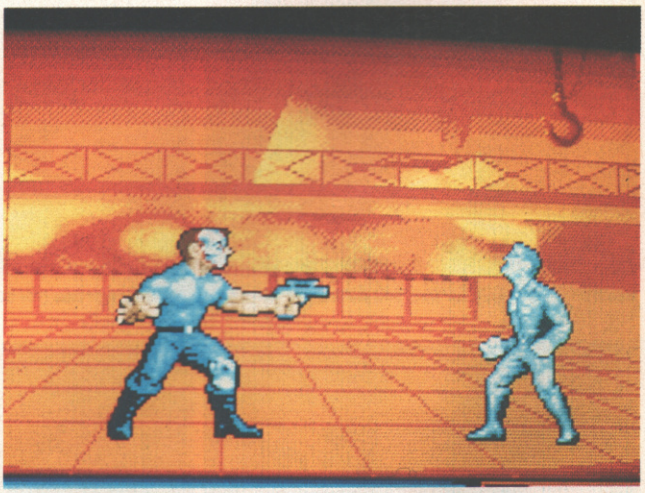
THE BOTTOM LINE

Worth a look for hardcore *Terminator* or Arnie fans, but otherwise offers very little indeed. Once more we await a decent Arnie game – is this guy unlucky in the computer arena or what?

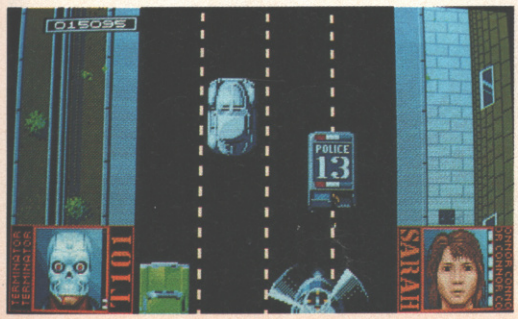
65 PERCENT

ATOR 2

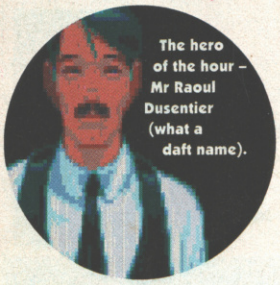
6 **Oh dear, it's sideways scrolling shooting time. You are up against the SWAT team outside the headquarters of Cyberdyne Systems (they're the guys who manufacture the computer which may or may not waste the entire world). There are three ways to shoot at the cops – up, down and straight. Yep, this section is as silly as it looks, and twice as easy to complete.**



7 **That dreadful T1000 chap still hasn't given up. Now he's chasing Arnie and the good guys down the highway – in a helicopter. Avoid hitting other cars, keep firing the gun out of the rear of the Transit, and you'll get through this easily enough.**



8 **And finally, it's into the seething steelworks for a final beat-'em-up. This section is not at all easy to complete, but that's not to say it's any good. As in all the fight sequences, controls are seriously limited. The only way to win is to have enough energy to sustain lots of damage, and to keep hitting Murder Man as hard and as often as possible. When that's over, so is the game, and it's straight back to the beginning again. Ho-hum...**



The hero of the hour – Mr Raoul Dusentier (what a daft name).

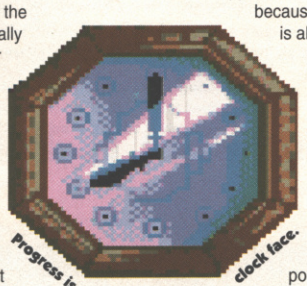
CRUISE FOR A CORPSE

Delphine's much-delayed pleasure cruise is finally about to set sail in the same waters as Lucasfilm's *Monkey Island*,

Game: Cruise For A Corpse
Publisher: Delphine/ US Gold
Price: £27.99
Authors: Paul Cuisset, Phillippe Chastal, Benoit Aron, Denis Mercier (programming), Christian Robert, Thierry Perreau (graphics), Jean Baudlot (music)
Release: Out now

So this is the big one, huh? The big hype. US Gold's post-*Monkey Island* blockbuster. Well, I must admit that I had my doubts. Sure, *Cruise For A Corpse* looked as slick as *Monkey Island*, but without such a strong plot and the humour, could *Cruise* ever really come close? In the end I decided to look at the game with fresh eyes, to play it with an open mind. And to forget about *Monkey Island*, for a short while at least.

In truth, despite all its finery and graphical trickery, *Cruise For A Corpse* is more comparable to games such as Infocom's *Deadline* (now re-released on budget), and the more recent *Maupiti Island*. You see, the task in the game isn't really to solve puzzles in order to gain access to new areas, as with most adventure games. Things are never quite that simple in *Cruise*. Many of the locations in the game can be visited as soon as the game commences, so that isn't the motivating force. What is though, is the gleaning of clues and the consequent confrontation with the other characters regarding these clues. *Cruise For A Corpse* is a devious beggar, and no mistake.



Progress is measured by this clock face.

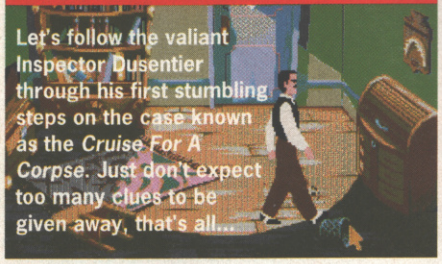
I suppose a bit of plot is in order, because with *Cruise* the plot is all. The story defines the characters and shapes the events, and so progress is a lot quicker if the background to events is known.

The player takes the role of Raoul Dusentier (hey, nobody's perfect), a police inspector (cue lots of Clouseau-inspired jokes about being an officer of the 'leugghhh') who just happens to get invited on a cruise, courtesy of the really very rich Niklos Karaboudjan (bless you). And what should happen, but (surprise, surprise) somebody is murdered. (Justification for the game title has to occur somewhere in there, after all). The unlucky recipient of this shortening in the life expectancy department is Mr Karaboudjan himself. And so the fun begins.

US Gold have gone to considerable lengths to make this game a 'quality' release. Even before loading there's the beefy box of goodies to wade through. In addition to five (count 'em) disks, there's a reference manual, a booklet containing character background information, and even a map of the ship (printed on suitably parchment-style paper). Head on into the game and the quality just rises and rises. If first impressions are everything, then *Cruise For A Corpse* has things sewn up quite neatly.

The graphics really are quite

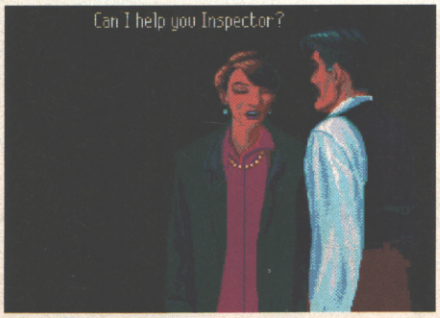
IT ISN'T EASY BEING A CORPSE



Raoul begins his quest for truth and justice.

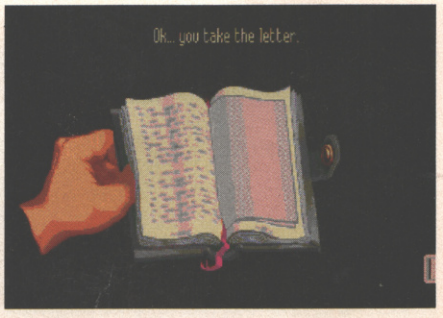
A-ha, my first clue (I'm not going to say where I found it).

Somehow, I doubt the mechanic did it.



Maybe Suzanne Plum can help. Talk about a sordid past.

A lover's tiff, perhaps? (Love is always a good motive).



Mmm, an incriminating letter in Fabiani's prayer book.

ONCE UPON A TIME, ON A SHIP IN A SEA FAR, FAR AWAY...

This is, of course, a French game, and so before the game commences we get the traditional technicolour intro unfolding on screen, showing events leading up to the murder, and just how Raoul Dusentier gets involved in the whole affair. They say murder ain't pretty, but that's not the case here...

The city of Paris – home of Inspector Raoul Dusentier. The postman calls, leaving an intriguing letter.

An offer from Niklos Karaboudjan, to join him on his boat.

Raoul accepts the invitation to join the cruise, unaware of the events just around the corner.

Uh-oh – it looks like murder. (But who's that lurking in the doorway?)

Raoul comes around, following a blow to the head. Things are still a bit out of focus at this point...

but can playing at murder really be as much fun as simply playing for laughs?

exceptional – of a quality normally seen only in American PC games – though with that bizarre French selection of colours. The screens use 32 colours, and the moving characters are polygon rather than sprite-based. This doesn't mean that they look blocky, however – in fact the only game which compares in terms of simulating human movement is *Prince Of Persia* (which apparently inspired Delphine to be so ambitious with their graphics).

The beautiful graphics and game depth do tend to be offset by the frequency and length of disk access, however. Thankfully, the data has been arranged quite sensibly, to minimise actual swapping between the five disks.

The in-game music is pretty sharp too, as are the sound effects. Walking along the deck with the ship swaying and the chatter of seagulls is mighty convincing. It now feels much more like taking part in a film, befitting of the title 'Cinematique', though true to Delphine form there are a couple of arcade sequences in there (but nothing to worry about too much). A fight scene, for example, can actually be avoided if the necessary steps in the adventure are taken. A neat touch.

Cruise also scores highly in the user-friendly stakes, with its handy parser system. If you've played any of Delphine's Cinematique games before, forget them. The parser, like the graphics has been given a complete overhaul. Whereas previously it seemed like a fight to achieve anything, *Cruise*'s parser actually feels like more of a help than a hindrance.

'Head on into the game and the quality just rises and rises'

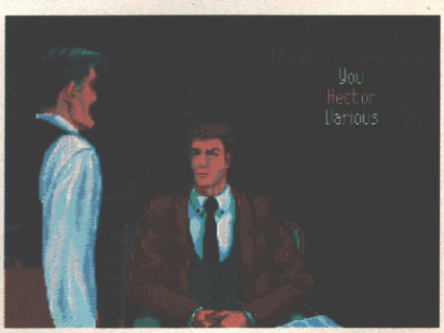
Everything is context-sensitive, so there's no need to wade through hundreds of unusable commands. For instance, examining a piece of paper would then add 'read' to the list of possible actions to perform on the paper. Then, once the piece of paper had been read, it would be possible to go and confront one of the other characters about the information just gained. This may seem like an obvious way to treat the player, but there's plenty of games which just don't cater for him this well.

Whereas *Monkey Island* (whoops, I'm making THAT comparison again) was actually very rigid in the plot structure, *Cruise For A Corpse* has a more non-linear gameplay style. There's more freedom of movement to suit the mystery-solving nature of the game, though I guess that the actual route to the solution isn't as loose as it might appear.

One cute touch is that whenever progress is made a clock appears, and the minute hand moves on ten minutes. This clock acts as a mark of progress in the game, rather than a true indication of time spent playing. It's eight in the morning at the beginning, and the solution has been reached when it reaches eight in the evening. A bizarre idea, but a helpful one. Seeing that clock advance is a great →

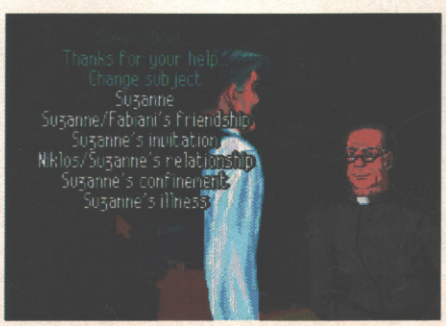
For the last time, I don't want a drink, I want information!

Ahh, the sweet sound of French musak. I'll chat to the guy.

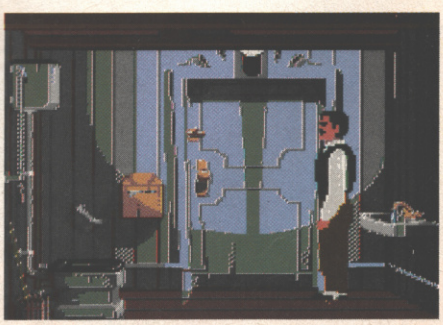


Let's see if I can pick up any juicy gossip about Hector.

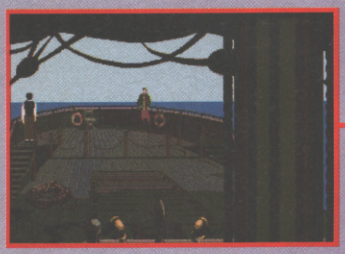
I might have known Father Fabiani would be eating.



Come on, father. Spill the beans on Suzanne.



This investigation has really gone down the toilet. Oh well.



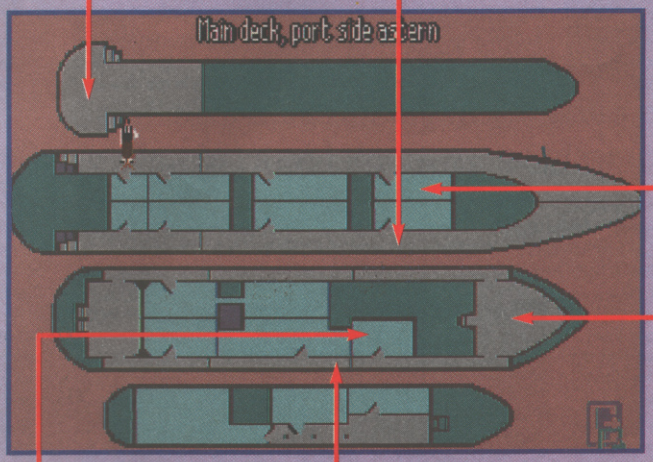
The mysterious Suzanne Plum, taking in some fresh air on the deck. Perhaps she can help with the enquiries. (Just don't offer her a drink at the bar).

Is it a peeping tom? Nope, it's just the inimitable Inspector Dusentier taking a (purely professional, you understand?) peek through one of the portholes.

A-ha! Father Fabiani and Désiré Grosjean's cabin. Mmmm. I wonder if any secrets are held within this suitcase. Let's make a closer inspection. (I mustn't get caught, though).

CRUISE CONTROL

In addition to the usual method of simply walking from one location to another, Raoul owns a map of the ship. By simply clicking on one of the locations, all that strenuous walking and waiting can be avoided.



Here we see the access to the lowest deck. Maybe that young washer boy can lead me to the killer (I doubt it thought).

The washroom (the maid washing clothes gives the game away really). Try striking up a conversation with her and she's remarkably abrupt. I wonder if she's hiding something?

Taking a stroll below deck. Every single visible object can be examined. Could one of those wooden beams be concealing a vital clue, perhaps?

incentive to keep on going.

US Gold claim that there are about 8000 lines of text used, which for a game which doesn't even let you type anything in is pretty impressive. Much of this is used to create believable, fleshed-out characters. And while conversations are limited to simply picking a subject and pushing for a response, everything has been so carefully interwoven that there is a definite feeling of real-life interaction there. It's not perfect, but a better system would be hard to find (one that fits onto an Amiga anyway).

It's reckoned that if the solution is known then it still takes eight hours to complete the game. This may sound a touch long-winded and tedious, but the sheer joy of working step-by-step through the game really eliminates any such thoughts. It's another of those 'draws you in and doesn't let go' affairs, and this is its real strength. Like *The Secret Of Monkey Island*, a few minutes playing is enough to let the brilliantly devised plot take hold. Without this, *Cruise* would have been an empty experience – a pretty one admittedly, but an empty one nonetheless. As it is though, *Cruise For A Corpse* gives you that warm feeling inside that only a round of burger, chips, doughnut, apple pie and triple shake can usually do. Most excellent. • ***MARK RAMSHAW***

That clever 3D effect in full. Here we see our intrepid inspector walking casually along the deck.

Oh look, he's coming this way. Boy, those graphics are really quite impressive. Notice the bobbing skyline.

Aahh! He's going to hit the camera! You've seen the walk into the camera effect in countless films, now experience it in a computer game.

UPPERS A marvellously-devised game plot, with many twists and turns, none of which appear contrived. The graphics too are impeccable – this is one game which doesn't take any short cuts. The Cinematique system finally comes of age, and lives up to its bold title.

DOWNERS A painful amount of disk access (once per location) can be off-putting, and the more freeform nature of the game will deter some adventure types.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Despite one or two irritating faults, an excellent game. I know it's a bit of a cliché, but you want a game that you'll come back to time and time again, then *Cruise For A Corpse* is the one to keep you going through those autumn nights. It's that sudden realisation that you can solve another clue, and advance another step closer to your goal that will really make it all worthwhile.

87 PERCENT

TERMINATOR 2™
JUDGMENT DAY

IT'S NOTHING PERSONAL

YOU ARE T-800

IN THE ACTION PACKED GAME-PLAY OF TERMINATOR 2, THE YEAR'S HIT MOVIE, AS IT EXPLODES ON TO YOUR COMPUTER SCREEN. SPECTACULAR GRAPHICS AND FIERCE ANIMATION THROW YOU HEADLONG INTO THE FURIOUS STORYLINE OF THE BOX OFFICE SMASH....AND A GAME YOU WILL NEVER FORGET.

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RODLAND

Game: Rodland
Publisher: Storm
Price: £25.99
Author: Ronald Pieket Weeserik (programming), Ned Langman (graphics)
Release: Out now

After experiencing the 'anti-cute' in *Brat*, Storm now offer an arcade conve

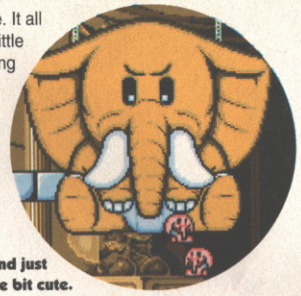
'So cute it'll make you puke', eh? This sounds like a job for a man with a strong stomach, the kind of guy who can play *Beast Busters* for hours without getting even a little bit squeamish, someone whose idea of a relaxing afternoon is one spent playing *Life & Death*, taking people's kidneys out for kicks. Inconveniently though, Colin's on holiday this week so I've got to do it instead.

Rodland is a conversion of a Japanese coin-op by Jaleco, although it's not one that's been seen much in this country. It's a simple and rather old-fashioned arcade game, where the only real objective is to massacre screen after screen of baddies. In fact, what it is is nothing so much as an updated version of Universal's ancient classic *Mr Do's Castle*. Now, before you all (well, the four of you who actually remember *Mr Do*) write in complaining that it's nothing like it at all, I'm referring here more to the style, structure and mechanics of the gameplay than saying it's the same game. Nonetheless, if you've played *Mr Do* the feeling of familiarity is almost overpowering. Still, we're not here to get bogged down in technical irrelevances, so let's find out what else there is to see on a trip to *Rodland*...

This is *not* your average kind of end-of-level baddie.

'a pure arcade game with absolutely no pretensions of depth'

Skipping past the usual 'Rescue Mom/Dad/Grandpa/Champion The Wonder Horse from the Evil Depraved Meanies' plotline, what we have here is 40 or so screens of platforms and ladders, all infested with meanies which have to be purged by the game's twin heroines, Tam and Rit. Despite being a couple of fairies they're no soft touches. They deal with the baddies by catching them on the end of their magic rods (ouch) and then smashing them from side to side against the floor until they die. It all looks not a little like something from a Tom And Jerry episode, and it's one of the grooviest methods of meanie-despatching I've seen since Bubby and Bobby's magic rainbows in *Rainbow Islands*. If the monsters aren't dealt with quickly, they get angry and rush around after Tam and Rit. Our chums will find themselves in big trouble if they don't get their tutus into gear.



Big, bad and just a little bit cute.

Luckily, Tam and Rit have another trick up their sleeves to help them out, in the shape of the magic rainbow ladders which they can use to create a quick shortcut between platforms, or just to climb up out of the way of the nasties. Also, when some baddies are killed they leave behind an extra weapon of some kind (a rocket or bomb or somesuch) which can be used against the remaining enemies. This, it has to be said, is a particularly satisfying way of getting rid of the little beggars...

The remaining item in Tam and Rit's arsenal is connected to the little flowers which grow on every screen. If they can pick all of the flowers, the monsters turn into turnippy-looking things, which when bashed reveal the letter E, X, T, R or A.

Collecting all the letters completes the current level instantly, and also nets an extra life (courtesy of an extremely cute fairy with funny ears), something which is all the more important when you note that *Rodland* doesn't have a credits system. When all your lives are lost, it's Game Over, and that's that. Which suits me fine.

I NEED A HERO(INE) – THE STORY SO FAR

Game Plots For Beginners: take one happy fairy land...

..add a few nasty giant creatures with evil plans...

...throw in a modicum of unprovoked kidnapping...

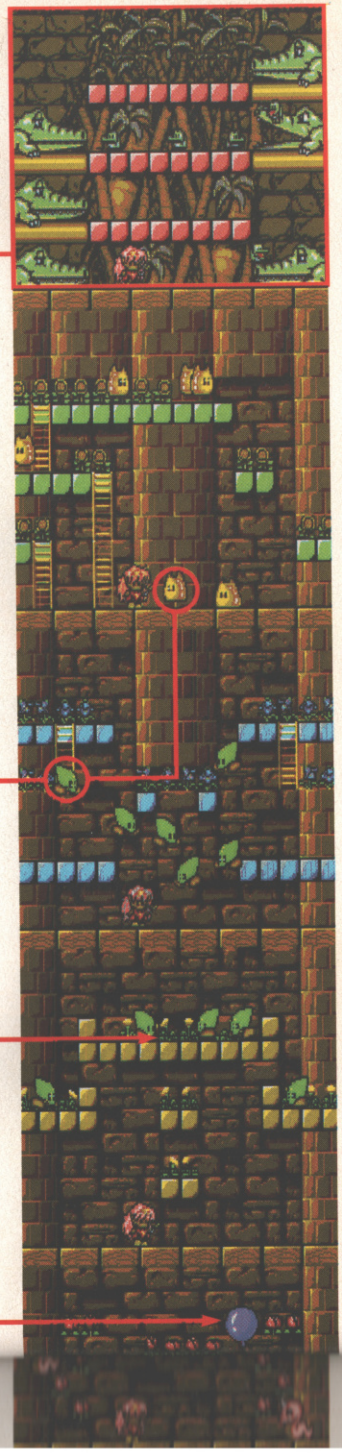
...break for a moment of poignancy...

...then introduce a sudden element of hope...

...and bring on the heroes! (Well, heroines in this case).

THOSE GOOD POINTS IN FULL

So now you know what to do. But is it worth doing? You bet your life it is. Like *R-Type II* a couple of months ago, this is a pure arcade game with absolutely no pretensions to depth whatsoever, and I love it to death. The gameplay is simple but compulsive, the controls are natural and instinctive, the graphics are cuter than the cutest thing ever, with a bit more baddie by biffing it around, you can also use it to whack and stun other ones which might be attacking at the time. You can



This is the domain of the first end-of-level nasties. The platforms with the crocs on move down the screen, while the crocs themselves spit deadly little baby crocs at you.

These baddies have a particularly nasty habit. If you leave them alone for long enough, their heads split open and they divide into two!

This screen looks tricky at first, but clever use of the magic ladders will see you through easily enough.

These balloons carry Tam & Rit to otherwise inaccessible areas of the screen. They can also be zapped for points. Watch out though – the monsters can use them too!

CREATURE FEATURE

...break for a moment of poignancy... ...then introduce a sudden element of hope... ...and bring on the heroes! (Well, heroines in this case).

'conversion which is billed as 'so cute it'll make you puke'. Yes, but is it any good?

is simple but compulsive, the controls are natural and instinctive, the graphics are cuter than the cutest thing ever, with a bit more cuteness on top, and...I could give you a shopping list of its good points all day. Mind you, since I can't think of any bad points right at the moment, I'd better keep at it for a while until I can come up with some.

JUST A COUPLE MORE GOOD POINTS

Rodland isn't a perfect arcade conversion – it's better than that. Storm's programmers have added a few neat little touches of their own to this accurate conversion of the game, but nothing that affects the gameplay. For example, just before they get to the 'angry' stage, many of the baddies will perform a little animated trick of some kind, like when the rabbits find and eat a tiny carrot. The squirrels, in particular, have a very definite character to them – if you stun but don't kill them, they sit up and shake their heads, and just for a second a mean, determined look comes over their lovely furry little faces. In a game that's already dangerously cute, stuff like this threatens to push the needle on the cute-o-meter right off the scale, but it's always on the right side of the fine dividing line between adorably sweet and annoyingly twee. Tam and Rit's method of defence is superbly versatile, too. Not only can you kill a baddie by biffing it around, you can also use it to whack and stun other ones which might be attacking at the time. You can flip baddies over your head just to get them out of your way (if, for example, you want to get past a monster to reach some flowers, but without killing it, so you can get a letter from it later), or you can sneakily deposit them right on top of the other player in a two-player game, in an attempt to get your opponent killed and bag all the points and glory for yourself (ha!). And then there's the general presentation, which is faultlessly slick throughout, creating a perfect arcade-like experience. Generally then, this is a flawless arcade game, strongly reminiscent of the *Mr Do* games, but then that's no bad thing in my book. *Rodland* looks gorgeous, it sounds gorgeous, and it plays like the kind of dream people usually write worried letters to agony aunts about, wondering if they're unconscious perverts. And if you don't like this, you probably ARE some kind of unconscious pervert. Lack of depth? Get a life. • ***STUART CAMPBELL***

'a perfect arcade-like experience'

UPPERS Beautiful and imaginative graphics, simple but addictive gameplay, lots of different ways in which to tackle each screen, near-perfect presentation, and mountains of cuteness. Storm have taken their time to get this one right, and it certainly shows.

DOWNERS Some sad cases will try to tell you it lacks depth. Since when were arcade games supposed to have depth? Simplicity is nothing to be scared of.

THE BOTTOM LINE

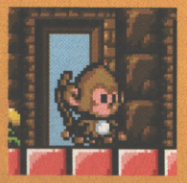
I haven't thought of any bad points yet – this is getting desperate. How about 'There aren't any free Tam & Rit plastic toys in the box'? Best I can do, I'm afraid. This is brilliant. Buy it.

86 PERCENT

ON THE OTHER HAND... True, I agree with most of what Stuart says – this is a gorgeous coin-op conversion, and Storm have made an excellent job of it, indeed improving on the original in a number of significant ways. My problem is it's all a bit too thin and, well, easy. At only 40 single-screen levels, and with such basically simple, repetitive gameplay, I think it's going to be hard pushed to give you £25 worth of entertainment. That's it really, though the game's great as far as it goes. If I was reviewing it, my mark would be in the seventies, I fear. *– Matt Bielby*

CREATURE FEATURE

A lurking lobster with his extending claw

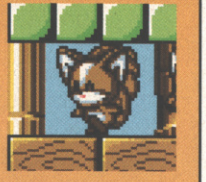


The mad monkey just runs about the place

Rabid rabbits make a bee-line for carrots

Shifty sharks cry killing tears

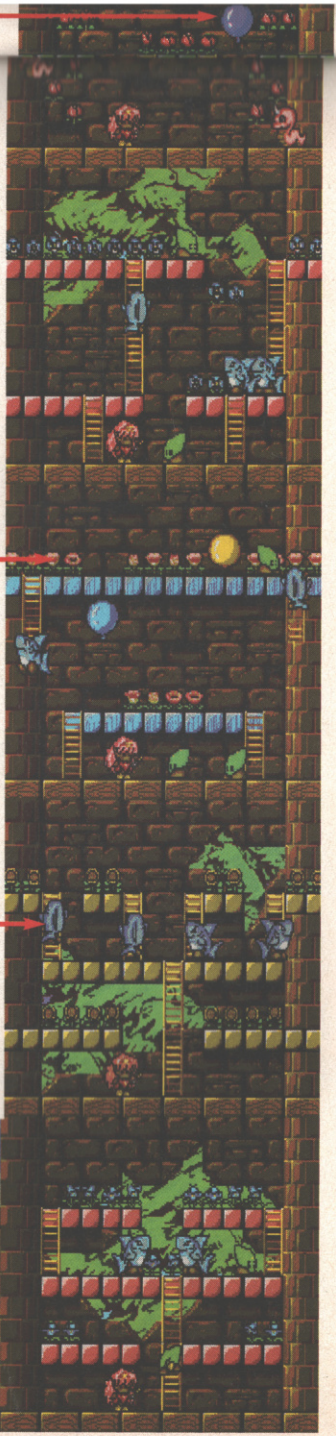
The slippery snake is, erm, bloody slippery



Sly squirrel, erm, shakes his head a lot

LEVEL ONE

The first couple of screens see Tam and Rit in a forest, then it's straight up the tower where Mom is being held prisoner.



monsters can use them too!

If you want to collect these flowers, you'll have to go for a balloon ride. Don't worry if you can't be bothered though, you don't have to get them to clear the screen.

These aren't proper sharks. These sharks are crap. Bursting into tears at the slightest opportunity, they're more trouble than they look - these tears kill!

MAGIC

Game: Magic Pockets
Publisher: Renegade
Price: £25.99
Author: Shaun Griffiths (design and coding), Mark Coleman (graphics) at the Bitmap Brothers
Release: Out now

After the disappointing *Gods*, the pressure is on for those

And so we get to the second release through Renegade from The Bitmap Brothers, and yes, it's as professional and good looking as anything we've seen from them. Graphics are nice (don't worry, I'll get a bit more specific than that in a minute), there's lots of it, and Betty Boo warbles away in the background to good effect. General opinion around the office has it that this is a lot better game than the recent *Gods*, if again falling short of being a real Bitmap classic of the order of, say, *Speedball 2*.

Me, I'm not so sure. If pushed I'd actually say that I enjoyed *Gods* a lot more. That was a game that initially seemed a bit, well, ordinary, but grew on me as I played it. *Pockets*, on the other hand, seems a bit ordinary and remains fairly ordinary all the way through. It's not bad as such – indeed, there's a lot about the game that's really very good indeed –

'I've got no incentive to play it beyond the purposes of writing this review'

but it could easily have been two or three times better. The simple fact is that if this game came to us out of the blue we'd be saying, "Hey, these Bitmap Brother folk look like guys to watch – iron out a few problems and they could go far." As it is, they're perhaps the most celebrated games creators in the country, and so anything less than excellent from them comes across as little more than a damp squib.

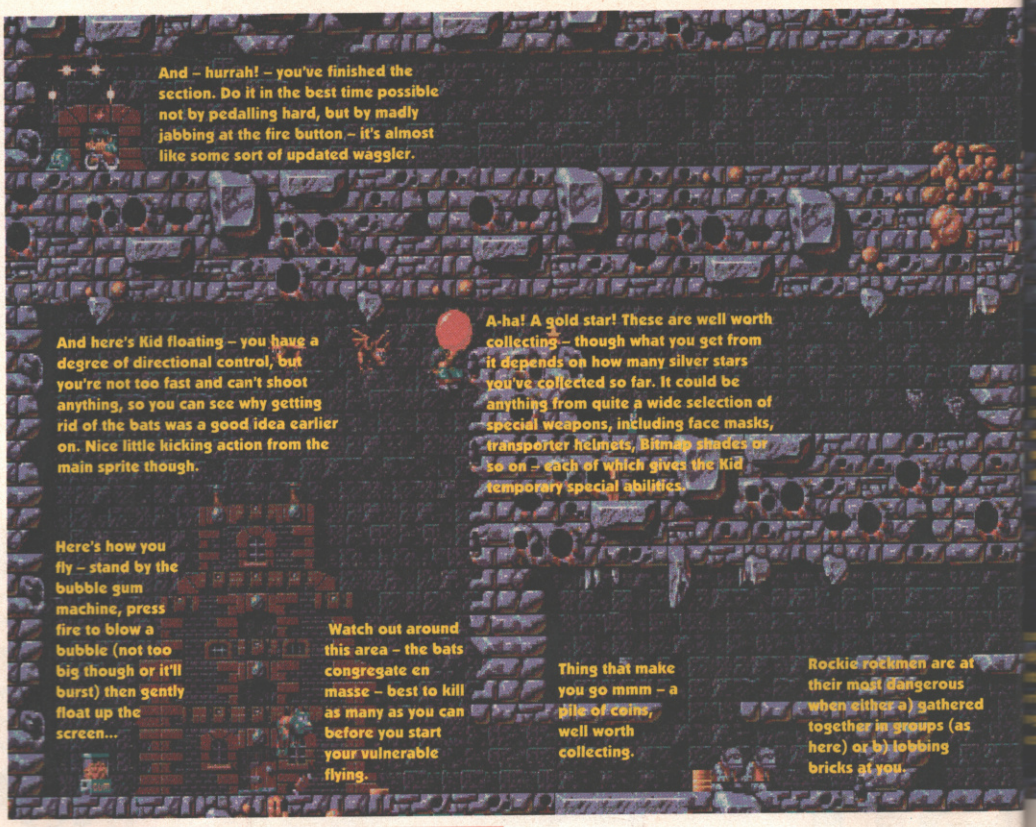
The first thing that you have to say about *Magic Pockets* is that it's a real what-you-see-is-what-you-get sort of game – something the Bitmaps haven't really involved themselves with since *Xenon 2*. That's not to say it hasn't got the secret rooms, hidden ways of collecting bonuses and so on that work so well in *Rainbow Islands*, *Mario* or whatever – because it has – but that there's nothing REALLY clever going on beneath all that. No discernible artificial intelligence to the characters, no hardcore adventuring a la *Cadaver*, no particularly radical new ideas at all – this is a game that stands or falls on pure game design. And – oh dear – it might not quite have fallen, but it's certainly tripping up all over the place. Game design-wise this simply isn't all that good.

So, going into Mr Negative mode, what's wrong with it?

1) The graphics. Now Mark Coleman is a very talented gentleman with a very distinctive style that's worked very well on a lot of Bitmap games in the past – *Xenon 2* and *Speedball* particularly – but on this evidence his style simply isn't suited to cute games. Try as he might, he can't seem to get away from that distinctive blue/grey metallic effect the Bitmaps have used two or three times too many already. Indeed, the first level of this is almost a re-run of *Gods* visually – though without the distinctive detailing of that game – and even when he gets out of the caves and into the forest and later levels his palate seems dominated by blue and brown.

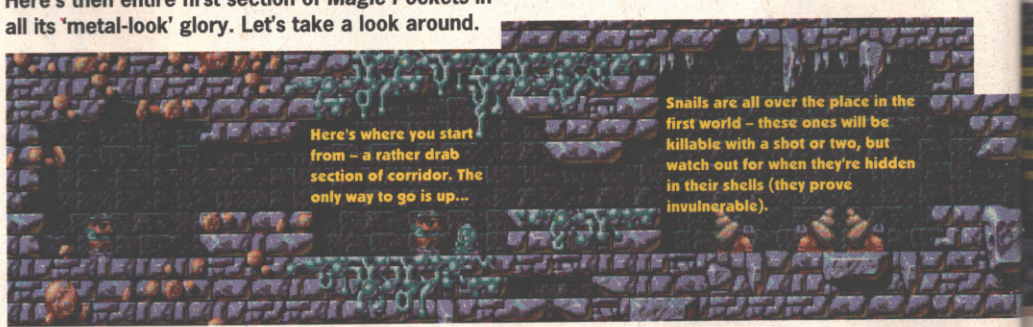
The sprites have a similar problem – they're cuter than stuff he's done in the past, but still rather too menacing for a platform game. They don't seem to do anything very interesting either, but then that's not really his fault, is it?

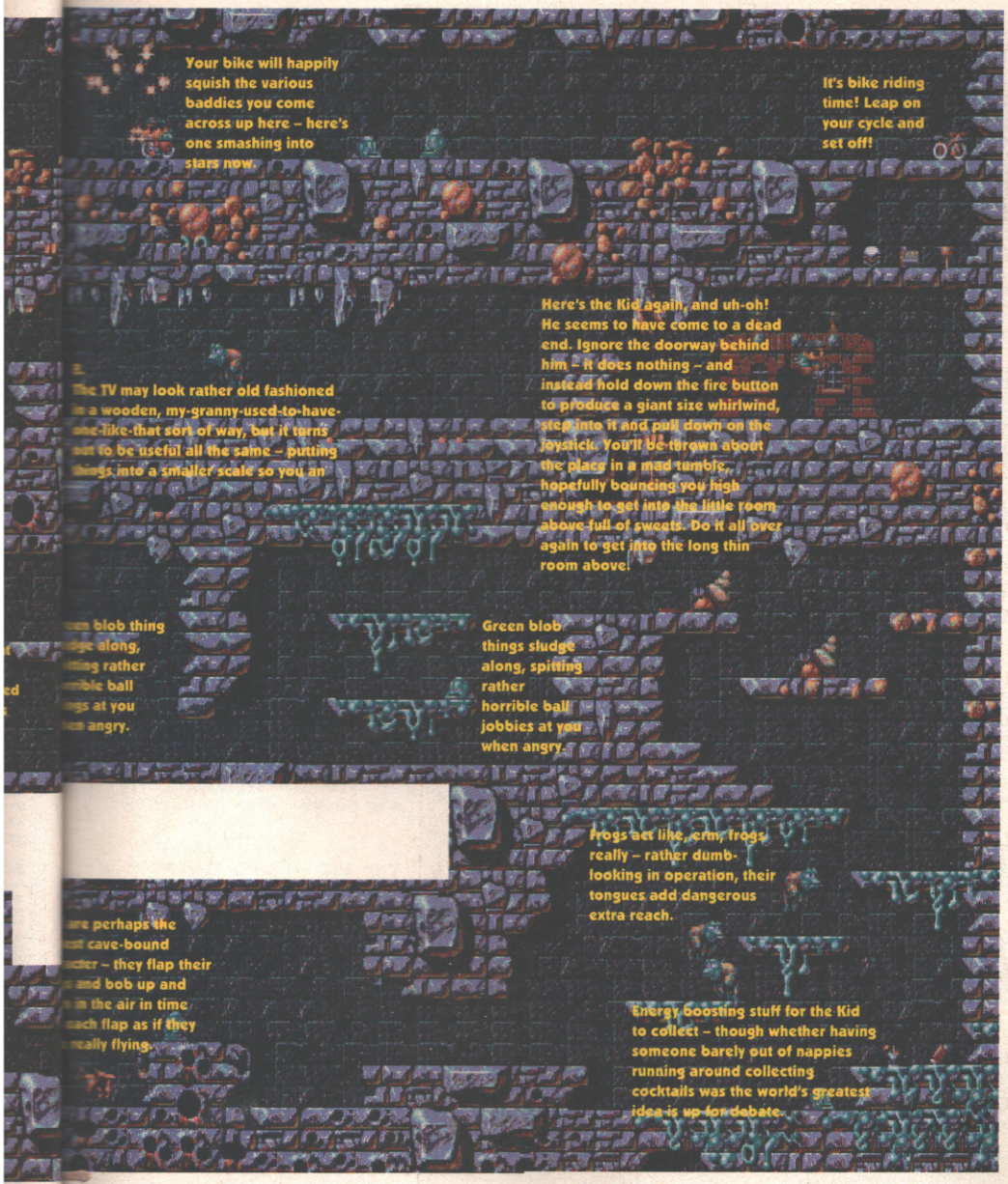
2) The levels. Oh dear, oh dear. How many times have we seen a forest, a lake, some caves and a snowy mountain top? Quite a lot I'd say – this is as generic as it gets. If you're not going to have any real link between levels – and you don't seem to get one in *Pockets* – you should surely be able to come up with some better ideas than this. Just to prove it's not that difficult I'll try to think of some off the top of my head: how about one level set in heaven (with lots of clouds, angels etc) and one set in hell (all red and lava-like)? Or what



WORLD ONE, LEVEL ONE

Here's then entire first section of *Magic Pockets* in all its 'metal-look' glory. Let's take a look around.





THE POWER'S IN YOUR POCKETS

Though it works in pretty much the same way each time, *Magic Pockets* actually gives you a different weapon to use each time. These are generally thrown by the Kid in a vaguely definable arc, making hitting characters standing right next to you impossible. Build up the power of your weapon (by holding down the fire button, *R-Type style*, and you get a super weapon with rather different properties. Like so...

The Whirlwinds

Found on the first level. The giant whirlwinds can trap baddies (jump on them for a sweetie bonus), or throw the Kid in an indestructible and baddie-destroying spin around the room. It takes some getting used to, but can prove very useful for getting up to otherwise unreachable platforms.

The Clouds

This second level weapon operates much as the whirlwinds in small mode, but the big ones can be stood on, creating *Rainbow Islands*-like platforms. Water drops released by the big clouds grows certain tree formations, allowing you to climb up the screen, Jack-And-The-Beanstalk style. (Yes, you're right – almost exactly the same thing happens in *Captain Planet*.)

The Ice Cubes

The big weapons on level three freeze the water, allowing you to cross it .

The Snowballs

Roll on of these small level four weapons along and it grows in size, picking up extra snow (rather like a real snowball would, in fact).

POCKETS

Bitmaps to come back with a real winner, but does *Pockets* have that magic?

about a set of levels based on ancient cultures – a Viking level, an ancient Egyptian level, an Aztec level and so on? Or perhaps one level set in a burning building, one set in a sinking ship and so on, disaster movie style? Or one level that's all early '70s hippies, one that's all late '70s punk, another with New Romantics in and so on? (You could have pastiches of particular people – Gary Glitter, Sid Vicious, Boy George – as the baddies). Okay, so some of these ideas might be a bit crap, but at least they're ideas – which is something you don't find (outside of small detail touches) all that many of around here. Honestly, I should have been a games designer.

3) The feel. Quite a vague one this, but you play it and you'll realise almost straight away that it's wrong. Kid is anything but light on his feet – he's too slow, he feels too heavy, and he's not particularly good at changing direction when jumping. In *Gods* the pace seemed a bit slow – the main character clumped around fairly slowly – but as the game was a fairly methodical puzzle/fighting based thing it didn't matter too much. Here it's very out of place.

It gets worse though. This is – or at least should have been – an arcade skills based game. Since you've got a rather esoteric weapon system – the elemental weapons you throw go in a (sort of) controllable arc – the skill should be in working out just how to hit any particular moving baddie. It SHOULDN'T involve you having to hit them again and again (and again) – many of them more than outstay their welcome and it becomes quite tedious having to bash away at them six or seven times to kill them off. More than a few people I've seen playing *Pockets* have complained that it's too repetitive, and →

99 percent of the time this is why. A game of this size demands more of a challenge than just bashing away at an endless stream of rather characterless baddies.
4) The lack of character. I've touched on this already, but anyway...

We've already got ourselves in quite a lot of trouble for slagging off a game (*Brat*) for having an annoying central character so I'm not going to repeat the mistake here. It does have to be said though, the Bitmap Kid has little to recommend him. Some characters you feel for, some you simply don't – we'd take Tiki the kiwi from *The NZ Story* or Bub and Bob (*Bubble Bobble*) over this pixelised Danny-out-of-the-New-Kids any day.

The baddies are a similar sorry story. Taken individually the graphics are all fairly good, but Mark Coleman has a problem – he draws everything the same. The overall style dominates more than any of the individual characters. The real problem though is that they all just wander about a bit – none of them are given anything particularly interesting to do.

But it can't be that bad, surely? Well no, perhaps it's not. When most people see this they go, "Hey, that looks good!", and they're right. And does, initially, look most impressive. Stylish, and packed with neat little presentational touches that lead you to expect much more from the game than you actually get. Things like:
1) The little directional arrows that whiz up into the air, pointing out which way you're meant to go.
2) The (rather old fashioned and wooden looking) TVs that crop up along your route, freezing the action and putting you into a long-shot map view, allowing time to get your bearings. (Surprisingly, these turn out to be of precious little use when actually playing the game).
3) The vast selection of fruits, sweets, and other goodies – including cocktails, a rather suspect collectable for a seven year old! – for you to pick up en-route. Various involved ways of collecting extra points – too complicated for me to go into here – provide a variety of other neat effects too.
4) The way that when the Bitmap Kid finally dies the world sort of closes down around him, leaving him trapped outside on the black end of game screen.
5) The different weapons he gets to use. Now while I'm not convinced that one single upgradeable weapon – such as the rainbows in *Rainbow Islands* – wouldn't have been a better way to go, these do allow for some neat touches. The way the snowballs can be rolled to create a big ball, the way whirlwinds can throw you about the room, the ways ice freezes water and clouds drop rain to grow forest trees (very similar to part of the upcoming *Captain Planet*) all have to be applauded.
6) As do individual spot effects – my favourite being the way Kid struggles when dropped in water without a helmet.

The Bitmap Kid: cool in the shades.

ANIMAL CRACKERS (OR KNOW YOUR ENEMIES)

Rather annoyingly, the baddies in *Magic Pockets* don't seem to have any organised characteristics as such. Oh sure, they all tend to act in particular ways – as is outlined below – but any individual baddie can take between one and about six hits to kill, making planning your attacks difficult because you never know how tough your immediate opponent is. As far as we're concerned that's a big game flaw, but there you go. What we CAN tell you about each of the game's hostile critters you'll find below...

The Cave World

Blobs
These little green things – they look a bit like Slimer from *Ghostbusters* – sort of slide about, occasionally jumping up and down for good measure. Watch out though! They spit smaller green blobby things when angry!

Bats
These flap around the place – unlike many flying baddies they actually seem to be doing a flying action – though occasionally they'll have a rest hanging from the ceiling.

Snails
Sometimes they hide in their shells (so you can't hurt them) but mostly just slither slowly after the Kid. Speed up when angry.

Frogs
These tend to jump back and forth with a rather vacant look on their faces. Watch out for the long tongues though – these increase their effective striking range quite a bit.

Rocky
These grey rockmen usually follow the Kid around, throwing rocks when angry.

The Jungle World

Snakes
Slither back and forth in an upright position, occasionally jumping from platform to platform.

Venus Flytraps
These act pretty much like the snakes, though when they open their mouths and spit it's a rather more spectacular effect.

Gnats
Annoying little buzzing thingies.

Killer bees
Even more annoying, mainly because they're tricky to kill, and they all come after you at once.

Chimps
One of the best animated characters, these run around, swing from branch to branch and tend to stand and beat their chests just before attacking the Kid. (Hmm. Perhaps that makes them gorillas then, not chimps after all).

The Lake World

Vultures
These flap around pretty much like the bats but – watch out! – they dive bomb you when angry.

Crabs
Scuttles back and forth, jumps around and, um, that's about it.

Fish
Generally swim around, but can jump in an attempt to get at the Kid if he's standing too close to the water's edge. Apparently the jumping action is a sly reference to the enemy submarines from Stingray (if you remember that).

Jellyfish
Erm, just swim around really. (They'd look pretty stupid jumping, after all).

Clam
These sit there spitting white (or sometimes special black) pearls. The Kid can't swim without his diving helmet toy found on this level – which can be made more difficult if a clam decides it'll make a handy home and sits in it spitting pearls at you!

The Mountain World

Eggmen
Ahem, yes. Not sure exactly what these are or what they're doing here, but watch out anyway! They throw snowballs at the Kid.

Eagle
Flaps about and then swoops at the Kid, much like the earlier vultures.

Yeti
Wanders around, then pounces when it spots the Kid.

Hare
Just acts sort of cute (for a nasty).

Snowman
Surprise, surprise! This too throws snowballs at the Kid.

THE KID GETS A ROUGH RIDE

Phew. I've given *Magic Pockets* a bit of a rough ride, but I think it deserves it – it's simply a very average game tarted up with lots of nice effects and presentation, and certainly a far cry from the sort of product we should be expecting from creators as talented as the Bros. Attractive though it may look, I've got simply no incentive to play it beyond the purposes of writing this review, and while some folk seem to disagree with me, the vast majority of people who've played it seem to be expressing a similar sort of dissatisfaction. Indeed, there's a large groundswell of opinion here that thinks it's a 60 percent game, but I think there's enough that's good about it to justify my mark. Dull. • ***MATT BIELBY***

UPPERS Slick graphics and typically neat Bitmap presentation allied to an archetypal cutesy platform game design provides a lot of immediate fun...

DOWNERS ...which palls very quickly when you realise how dull, samey, repetitive and unimaginative it all is.

THE BOTTOM LINE

A very disappointing second release from Renegade – not because the game's bad as such, but because it simply should be a whole lot better. No one's going to be loading this one up for fun six months down the line, that's for sure.

75 PERCENT

MAGIC POCKETS

THE BITMAP BROTHERS

They've nicked his bike.
They've whipped his helmet.
This time they've gone too damn far...

NO ONE MESSES WITH THE BITMAP KID

features:

stacks of levels • heaps of weapons • swarms of intelligent nasties
bonus games • secret rooms • loads and loads of power-ups

TM BITMAP BROTHERS

C1, Metropolitan Wharf, Wapping Wall, London E1 9SS
© 1991 The Bitmap Brothers. Published by Renegade

Renegade

Alas poor Robin, I knew him well. The prince of thieves makes like James Dean, dying young and leaving a beautiful corpse. (Erm, beautiful if you're a girlie, of course).

Looks like we've got a fight on our hands. Don't worry though, good ol' Robin can take care of himself (especially against a couple of nurses as seems to be the case here).

We've had both the American and British movies, the No.1 song, and even a TV ad.

ROBIN HOOD

Game: Robin Hood
Publisher: Millennium
Price: £25.99
Author: Ian Saunter (design), Steve Grand (graphics), Richard Joseph (sound)
Release: Out now

In computer games, as in movies, there seem to be two main ways to portray Robin Hood. You can go for the strong, sensitive and square jawed approach – as Kevin Costner did (more or less) in the recent movie – or you can go absolutely mad and camp the whole thing up outrageously. Millennium have taken the second route with this game, and, happily, it works a treat. Here Robin Hood is a bimbling idiot, wandering around telling everybody he's depressed, wearing unfeasibly tight tights, and spending most of his time chasing after his allegedly merry men...

Robin Hood (the game) works in a 3D isometric view – not unlike most of these god sim things, in fact – which scrolls around a fair section of merry olde England, including Nottingham Castle, a good dollop of Sherwood Forest and, erm, some fields. An eight by eight square, it's populated by some forty characters, each of whom has his or her own distinct personality (although none are especially complex, it has to be said) – the Normans are brutal and thick, the peasants are fickle and thick, and the merry men tend to be loyal and, well, thick.

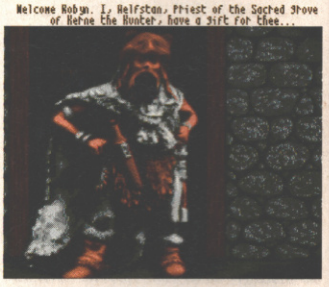
'This is one of those adventures that you really immerse yourself in'

The merry men are all there – and all good value entertainment wise – as is the delectable Maid Marian, the poisonous sheriff, and all your favourite supporting characters, as well as (for no easily justifiable reason) a fire breathing dragon.

ONCE UPON A DEEP, DARK FOREST

The plot begins with our dispossessed hero dumped on the doorstep of his castle by the wicked sheriff. Since the Robin Hood story has been drummed into most of us since we were about three, it doesn't take much working out to realise roughly what you've got to do – recruit some followers, redistribute the local wealth (using an exciting new scheme called 'daylight robbery'), regain the castle, kill the villains, get hitched to Marian, and, in the course of all this, become even more immensely popular with the locals than you already are. It's all in a day's work for your average medieval champion of the people.

Of course, in order to do any of this you're going to have to be able to move your character around the countryside –



Golly! A pressie for me? Is it a puppy dog, or perhaps a new Trek, or a pony? Eh? Eh?

your controls are in the form of a column of icons down the left hand side of the screen. By clicking on the lips thingy you can talk to another character (using faintly hilarious comic book style speach bubbles), while clicking on the sword helps you disembowel him, and so on (see the icons box elsewhere in the review). Character interaction is at the core of this adventure, though your role is fairly passive for the most part; while you can choose who you wish to converse with (of course) the game will take care of the appropriate words. So, while chatting up Marian, Robin will deliver a smoochy line of sickening romantic fiddle–faddle ("The sight of a pretty maiden does lift my heart greatly" or something similar), while, when grappling with Normans, Robin will start shouting fave medieval put-downs of the "Got you, varlet" variety. Hardcore adventurers may well find this a bit restrictive and really rather silly, but then this isn't a hardcore adventure and was never meant to be. While not as witty or well thought out as the speech in, say, *Monkey Island*, the effect is lightweight, entertaining and really quite jolly, serving the purposes of the gameplay admirably.

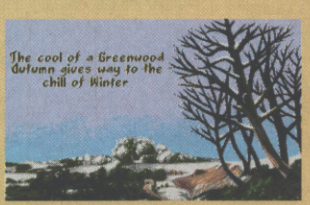
So how do you progress? Well, mostly by simply being in the right place to take part in the right event – or talk to the

SEASONS GREETINGS FROM SHERWOOD FOREST

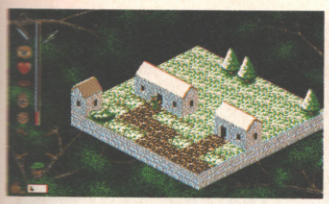
Time may fly by, but Robin and his merry men continue to wear unfeasibly tight tights. Oh yes, they also continue to take from the rich and give to the poor. *Robin Hood* indicates the passing of time with some fetching picture postcards...

Hmm, there don't seem to be too many trees in this here forest (oh, this is summer by the way)...

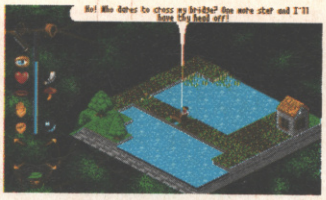
...which would make Errol Flynn-style branch-leaping antics pretty tricky (not to say extremely dangerous).



Oh, that last one was autumn by the way, and this here's winter. Pretty isn't it? (In fact, I'd say they all were).



It's chrimble time in Sherwood Forest, but Robin never stops his good work.



Remember this scene, anyone? Robin meets the diminuitive John.

Oh oh, I can feel a hanging coming on. Ever get that sore neck feeling?

Hubba, hubba. It's the fair Marian, for whom I have only honourable intentions

Now (at last) it's the turn of the Amiga.

right person – at the right time. Doing things in the correct order is all-important – for example, terminating the sheriff before you've won over Marian and the locals is a stupid move, while saving Will Scarlet from the hangman's noose is a smart one. Screw up and you'll either die or see your popularity ratings – you have various

Boo, hiss! It's Robin's arch rival, and all-round hated man, the Sheriff of Nottingham. He'll get his, don't you worry.

energy bars you've got to juggle with throughout the game – take a nasty dive. You know things are going well when certain characters present you with (immensely useful) gifts in return for doing them some favour. You'll have to find out how to win these treasures (seven in all) yourself, but suffice to say, some are more easily attainable than others.

Impressively, Millennium have gone to some trouble to ensure that events seem to be taking place in a believable medieval world. While you spend your time walking around, meeting new people, slaying wicked Normans, and robbing fatcat merchants, all around you get the sense of a thriving community full of people happily getting on with their lives. Oblivious to your struggles, peasants will be tilling the land, while Norman soldiers go about their gormless patrols (a task to which they seem well suited).

ALL IS NOT WELL IN THE FOREST

If this all sounds peachy then, yes it is – to a point. Unfortunately the game has a number of problems that you'll stumble across almost immediately. For a start, everyone is small to the extent of being Very Very Small Indeed. So small, in fact, that it's sometimes hard to see just who is who. This isn't always too much of disaster, but it does niggle.

Another problem is with the sequencing of events. If you save somebody's life and get caught by the Normans in the process, your pal will still be singing praises of your bravery while you are swinging from the gallows. Clearly, events overlapping often create absurd situations, which can be irritating – though, to be honest, most of the time they merely add to the camp appeal of the game.

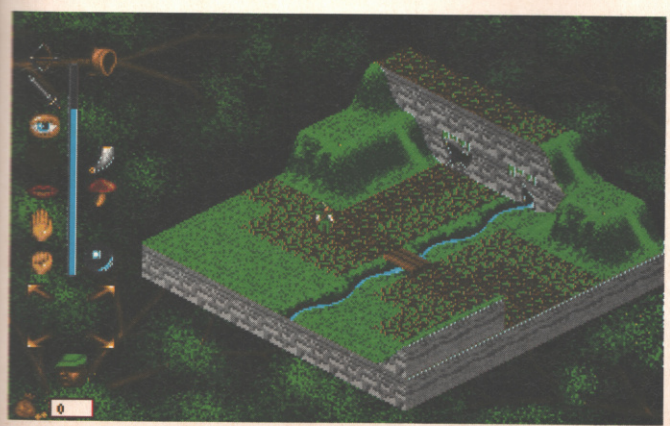
In fact, the whole thing is packed with little mistakes or quirks which by rights should be annoying – but aren't. The inhabitants of Nottinghamshire can't seem to work out if they should speak in classic Olde English, 20th Century Californian, or even BBC English circa 1935, for instance. You get phrases which have only been in currency for twenty years ("hey dude") jammed next to words which only a genuine Anglo Saxon could get away with ("methinks", say), creating an odd effect that sometimes seems deliberate, sometimes accidental, and sometimes just a little bit crap. Still, if Kevin Costner can get away with it in *Prince Of Thieves*, I suppose Millennium can too...

In fact, the most surprising thing is just how much this game manages to get away with. Things which would annoy immensely elsewhere instead prove to be merely slightly irritating here – or sometimes even less than that, coming across as more a charming little idiosyncrasy than a fault at all.

There are a good 30 or so hours of gameplay here, but even if you finish the game quickly there's enough to be seen and done to make simply exploring it a pleasure on its own. This is one of those 'blanket' adventures that you really

Oh dear. Robin dies without so much as a fond kiss from Marion. The silly sausage.

immerse yourself in, rather than a linear problem solver, and as far as I'm concerned that's all to the good. I'm no great adventure player, but here is a game I've really enjoyed, and I dare say that anyone would. While it's not as challenging or original or funny as, say, *Mega lo Mania*, this is a worthy outing for England's most famous hero, executed with sufficient wit to make it one of the autumn's more noteworthy releases. • ***COLIN CAMPBELL***



Luckily for Robin, Little John isn't about *every* time he wants to cross a bridge...

UPPERS Witty and lightweight adventure with plenty of swashbuckling, character interaction and that genuine Sherwood Forest feel (whatever that is).

DOWNERS Not nearly as well executed as many contemporaries; the size of on-screen characters can get annoying.

THE BOTTOM LINE

An adventure in the true sense of the word. Fun, exciting, challenging, and there're a few laughs to be had. That said, there are enough glaring imperfections to keep it firmly outside the classic bracket.

79 PERCENT

TAKE CONTROL IN SHERWOOD

A quick guide to the Robin's (rather blurry) trial by icon.

Bow: Fires arrows in a straight line, but due to the tiny size of characters, seems to be quite arbitrary in who gets hit. Not a great weapon, but becomes more useful with practice.

Sword: Always useful for killing Normans, but won't help you if there are more than a couple of bad guys. Try not to kill too many people, as this rarely offers any benefits.

Heart: Will allow you to run quickly but wastes energy. Only worth using if someone's about to stretch your neck.

Lips: Allows you to talk to other characters. Some are more communicative than others.

Give hand: Use to give gold to the poor.

Take hand: Use to take gold from the rich, or gifts from your allies.

Directions: Moves the hero about (although you can simply point and click on screen, or use cursor keys).

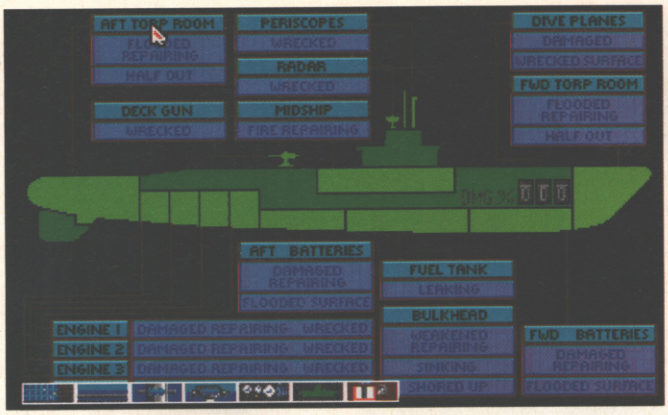
State of Health: Puts you into the gauge screen, where you can check your bravery, popularity, strength and energy ratings.

SILENT SERVI

Game: Silent Service II
Publisher: MicroProse
Price: £34.99
Author: Dave Shea
Release: Out now

You know the feeling. Every once in a while a game pops up that you just adore completely, and nothing any disbelievers might say will alter your fascination. For me, this year's beauty is *Silent Service II*. Matt hates submarines games, Stuart hates submarine games, I know a lot of people find them unbearably tedious. I'm not listening though. Honestly, this is special.

Here's one reason why: at one stage, I was enjoying joint command of a sub with a pal, and we were cowering at 300 fathoms with all engines off, and half the Japanese Imperial Navy above and around us, bleeping sonar across the Pacific looking for our sorry butts. We actually sat there (in the safety of my living room, you understand, but with the lights turned off) whispering to one another in case the blighters heard us...



The damage report screen gives full stats on every conceivable part of the sub.

TAKE A LOOK BELOW THE SURFACE

Okay, yes, the idea of sitting in silence during a computer game, doing absolutely nothing, may sound a bit daft. But it's the extraordinary tension created that counts here, rather than the level of activity – if you give it the time and allow it to, this is the sort of game that'll grab you slowly by the gut, almost so you don't notice, and then relentlessly tighten its grip. Before you know it, a ridiculous number of hours will have flown by and you'll be well and truly hooked.

Of course, it helps that this isn't just any old sub game. While the original, award winning and really rather wonderful *Silent Service* stuck you in the North Atlantic up against the Nazi menace, this one has you fighting off the Japs in the Pacific theatre. The game lasts from the Pearl Harbour debacle through to the altogether satisfying defeat of the Japanese empire in 1945. There are a number of ways to play – individual battles, individual patrols, practice – to get you into it, but the more experienced submariner will soon look on these as mere exercises. In the more comprehensive War Career option you'll be attempting something rather more difficult – spending a long time at sea and simply managing to stay alive.

'I found the killing enthralling but it was the stalking and hiding that made it so'

Initially, you'll find yourself based in an available American sub pen, trotting off on missions to hunt out enemy convoys and log yourself up a healthy tonnage of shipping. It's up to you to choose a patrol area, then bimble over there and start sinking the suckers. Using the keyboard, you guide your sub through territoral waters until the computer cuts in to inform you that Japs are about. The machine will let you know how close you can get to the villain without being spotted, but after that you're on your own. The patrol section, it has to be said, is a bit easy, in that all you need do is move a dot across a map of the Pacific until you happen to bump into something, but it makes for a nice intro for submarine game-phobes – at least they can't complain that nothing's happening. There's no notion of navigation in here at all, which is good news – if there were everyone would start complaining that the whole thing is too realistic, and therefore far too boring.

There's still enough in this section to get you going though. If you find yourself attacked (there's a quick tip or two coming up here) try this: first off, get yourself underwater, down deep and out of sight. Just hide. Once the enemy see you, your chances of survival are sliced by a good 50 percent. A good captain will check out his charts, sneak up on the baddies and then bang off a few torpedoes, then get the hell of out of there. Submarine warfare, as you'll soon find out, favours the cautious rather than the valiant.

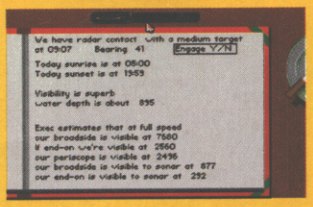
THREE HOURS OF CAT AND MOUSE

Wasting merchant shipping is child's play, but when it comes to disposing of 30,000 tons worth of aircraft carrier, the stakes change considerably. One battle against a military convoy can take hours of cat and mouse tactics before you even get a shot in, and this – stepping out of the all-enveloping game and into the real world for a minute – is where a hard nosed buying decision cuts in. If the notion of taking three hours to kill one sprite turns you off completely then *SSII* is not going to find its way into your games collection. Ignore the high

RUN SILENT, RUN DEEP

Taking on the might of the Japanese in the Pacific.

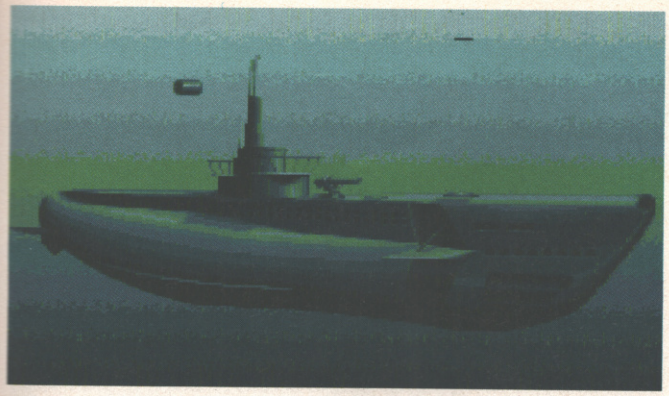
1 **Patrolling the area. I chose the Western Pacific because it's close to Pearl Harbour, and there's only sixty days worth of fuel on board. If you run out, the game will ruthlessly bring an end to your war career.**



2 **We have contact. Always take a note of your enemy's chances of detecting you – this will dictate your strategy completely. And remember, if it's night-time you'll have a much better chance of survival.**

3 **I've dived to periscope level and banged off a torpedo at what seems to be merchant shipping. Even so, enemy identification is difficult, and it's always wise to keep ones distance.**

4 **Check out your charts to see how the torpedoes are doing. After firing, smart Captains adjust position.**

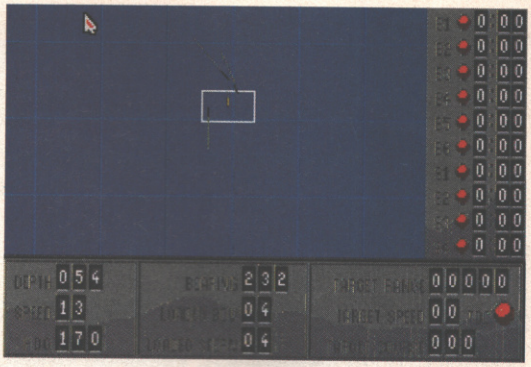


The depth charges are getting dangerously close. Time to move on it...

mark at the bottom of the page – this simply isn't you sort of game. For those of you who do fancy a hard nosed challenge though, *SSII* is worth £35 of anyone's cash. I found the killing to be enthralling, yes, but it was all the stalking, hiding and escaping that made it so.

It's a highly emotionally charged sort of game, you see. The Japanese Navy in WWII was all too capable of taking out unwary submariners with little trouble, so once you hear those sonar pings bouncing off your boat (submarines are always 'boats', never 'ships', the hefty and informative manual tells us) you'll use every nasty, devious trick available to avoid having to start the game all over again.

It's all over here. Bulkheads collapsed at 100 fathoms, and your daring Captain is now nothing more than a horrid lump of sludge.



As usual, I've made far too much noise (I must have sneezed or something) and the nasties are dropping charges left, right and centre.

To repeat my basic point yet again then, if you can stomach the initial slowness, *Silent Service II* potentially offers as many hours of gameplay as anything you'll ever see. As with most MicroProse games, this is historically accurate (to a worryingly fanatical degree) and will actually teach you quite a lot while you're playing it (though it's not information you'll find much use for in normal civilian life). Also, to the publisher's credit, everything is very well presented and slick, the aforementioned manual worthy of a place on any bookshelf, while the handy keyboard guide proves, er, handy. All this adds up to a heavy-duty but thoroughly enjoyable military simulation that seems to have struck a cool balance between realism and excitement. I love it – but that doesn't necessarily mean that you will. • ***COLIN CAMPBELL***

'We actually sat there with the lights turned off, whispering in case the blighters heard us'

It may not be everyone's cup of tea – heavy duty military simulations of this sort never are – but with the original *Silent Service* selling half a million world-wide, it's unlikely MicroProse are going to find themselves out of their depth with this one. (And – would you believe it? – it's fun too!)

CE II

UPPERS Engrossing and accurate simulation that could well take over your life for a few weeks. Well presented (lovely manual), historically accurate (at least, it claims to be and who am I to know any better?) to a worrying degree, and perfectly capable of getting hooks of steel into you if you give it half a chance

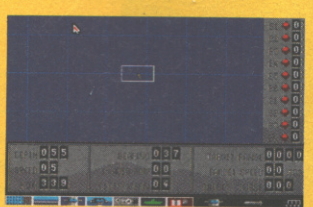
DOWNERS Well, it's a sub game – the slowest, initially most boring looking sort of simulation – and some people hate them. If you're not into military strategy, this has little chance of changing your mind.

THE BOTTOM LINE

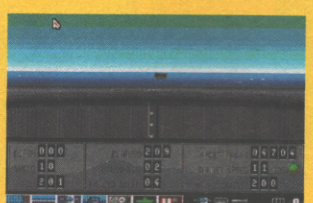
Silent Service II's target audience will not be disappointed. If you've been waiting for this, buy it.

86 PERCENT

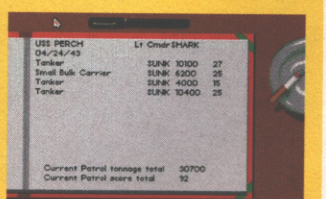
5 This guy is obviously a monkey. I've surfaced to finish him off with some deck guns (range 4,000 yards).



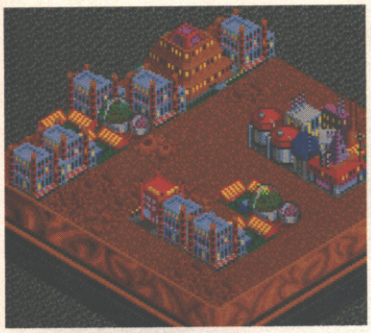
6 Now it's time to study those charts and close in on a straggler. Many ships will be faster than a submerged submarine, so navigation is a key skill.



7 Our other friend has been caught and snared. At the moment I'm on the deck, and looking through the computerised binoculars which you use when deciding on firing strategy.



8 Oh dear. Three military ships (probably destroyers) have been alerted and they're out looking for me with sonar detectors. (At the moment I'm spending most of my time trying desperately not to make much noise).



Your most important task in keeping the punters happy is to build them lots of houses to live in.

Game: Utopia
Publisher: Gremlin
Price: £29.99
Author: Graham Ing
Release: Out now

Take four of the most popular Amiga games ever (*Populous*, *Powermonger*, *Sim City* and *Mega lo Mania*). Chuck 'em all together into a big cauldron and mix them up a bit, and a number of things will occur. First, you'll come up with a bit of a strange effort where lots of sheep fly around in biplanes bombing enemy skyscrapers. Throw it away (or sell it to Jeff Minter, suit yourself). Next, you'll probably pull out a strategy wargame where city councillors cause earthquakes with tactical nuclear weapons. Throw it away. After that, your next result is more than likely to be a kind of sports sim set in a large stadium, where teams of WWI generals race to be the first to pull heavy cannons up steep grassy hills (you may have seen something like this already in the Royal Tournament which pops up on TV every year just after some showjumping). Throw it away. In amongst the gooey mess that you'll now have left at the bottom of the cauldron, the chances are there'll be a game not a million miles away from *Utopia*...

'It's Just Another God Sim, I'm afraid'

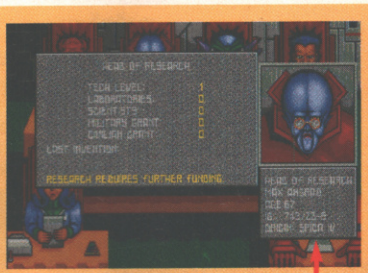
A RAVING EGOMANIAC ON MARS

Utopia sets you up on a faraway planet, sometime in the fairly near future. It's an inhospitable place, with an unbreathable atmosphere, ground unsuitable for growing food plants

UTOPIA

Take a large dollop of *Sim City*, add the 3D view of *Populous*, transport the whole

HEAD OF RESEARCH – Max Angrad is responsible for the scientific community. He'll tell you how many labs you're running and how well they're all staffed, as well as how much money they have to spend. Keep the cash coming if you want to see any real results from this area.



COLONY ADMINISTRATOR – Jav Xebrix keeps track of the non-human resources (air, food, fuel, power, and ore), informing you of production, usage and storage levels. If the people are starving, this is the chap who'll tell you about it.

CIVIL ENGINEER – Kalrog Massimer tells you the numbers and types of every building in the colony. Sounds like a pretty tedious job to me, but then I suppose someone's got to do it.

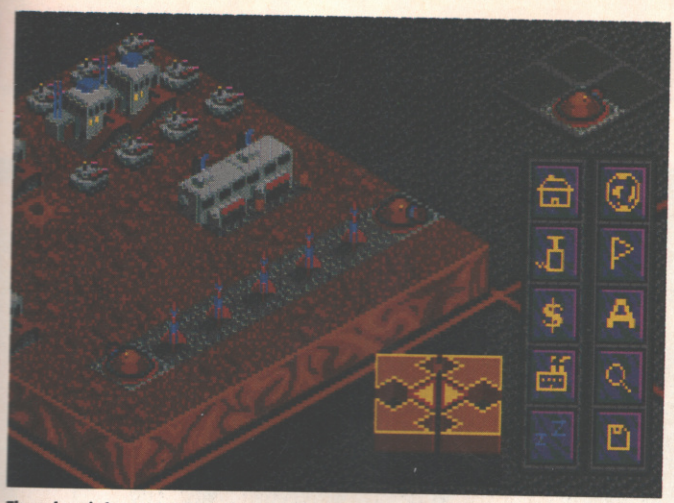
FINANCIAL CONSULTANT – Robert Damien is the colony's accountant. He reports on the colony's monthly and yearly expenditure, and also its income from trading, taxation, and support grants from Earth. You'll need his help to plan growth properly.

SENIOR PSYCHIATRIST
Miss Belegere reports on the structure of the colony's population (Technicians, Medics, Scientists etc) and the statistics relating to them (birth rate, morale, population density and so on). She'll help you keep the colony happy.

SUPREME COMMANDER
Well, that's you really, but Quarx is nominally in charge of all the armed forces. He'll tell you how many of each type of mobile or ground-based defence unit you've got, and when you eventually encounter alien enemies, he'll keep tabs on how efficiently your forces are performing and whatnot.

C.A.B. IT UP

I don't know what this collection of (ahem) 'friendly' faces is doing in a colony from Earth, but ugly or not, these advisers are always on hand to keep you up to date with the state of your affairs.

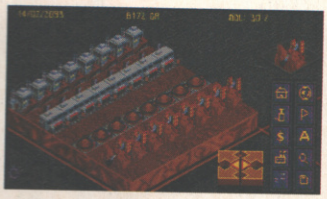


The colony is best served by a 'safety first' approach, I think you'll find.

There's no need to leave gaps like this – the colony works perfectly well with all the buildings wedged tightly together.

These hydroponic farms are your source of food – remember to keep them safe!

The now-traditional out-of-town sports venue – well placed to keep those hooligans away from the streets.



Call me conflict minded, but there's absolutely no harm in being well prepared. Arms at the ready then!

When your solar panels are inoperative, you need a big power station to take the energy strain – like this one in fact.

thing to another

planet, and *surely* the results must be out of this world?

in, and alien civilisations always lurking just off-screen, waiting to pounce on your new-found paradise just as soon as you get it looking half-decent. Not that any of this worries you, of course. As newly-appointed overall commander of the colony you have every aid imaginable at your disposal, from hydroponic plants which cultivate crops in an Earth-like atmosphere to ship construction yards which can build all sorts of spacecraft, from exploration vessels to huge warships to nuclear-powered fusion cruisers (there'll be more on them a bit later).

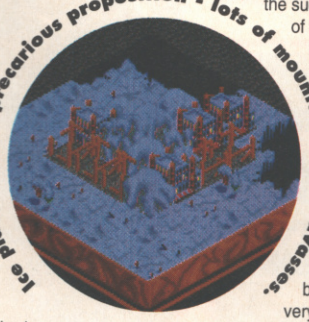
You also need to build and maintain power stations, life support systems and facilities to mine the planet for ores (for building spaceships, tanks etc) and fuels, and all the time keep up the colonists' quality of life by building homes and amenities for them, controlling birth rate, and so on. All this has to be done as quickly and efficiently as possible, too, because the aliens are coming and they're not going to listen when you go "Hang on a minute, I haven't built any tanks yet"...

'*Utopia* is still appealing on a very basic egomaniac level'

DOES IT GO ONE STEP BEYOND?

The whole thing is played out in a *Populous*-style 3D perspective (further *Populous* elements come from the various types of landscape you encounter), but as you've probably already heard it plays like nothing so much as '*Sim City* In Space'. The modular design, the various types of building, the need to keep the population happy and the financial juggling are all strongly reminiscent of Infogrames' classic of municipal planning, the only major difference being the fighting element. Then again, this takes quite a while to manifest itself (more on that later too), so for the first few hours you'll hardly notice the difference.

Okay, so far so froody. But what you need to know is, is this Just Another God Sim or does it rise up above the crowd and dazzle with ingenuity and brilliant design, enrapturing all those who play it and disrupting reviewers' deadlines for weeks on end? It's Just Another God Sim, I'm afraid. Still, being no better than *Sim City* and *Populous* is hardly a heinous crime in the software world. *Utopia* isn't anything approaching a bad game and it has many things to recommend it, but at the end of the day I found myself just a little bit disappointed. After hacking through the extensive manual for an age I finally felt up to tackling the game, but in play I found it all, of all things, a little simplistic. There's a fairly frantic period for the first couple of years when you try to build up some defences, then it's just a question of beating off alien attacks, clearing up the damage, and getting ready to do it all again.



This would be fine, except that the game doesn't initially seem to give you any chance to actually win. All you can do is slow the enemy down before their next attack, and this can really crush the game's addictive qualities. Still, devote the entire colony to tank-producing, and eventually you'll wipe out the rival city, which leads you to the other big problem. The other big problem with *Utopia* is that it doesn't really offer any obstacles to the successful development of the colony. You don't need the thoughtful planning of *Sim City* to keep your city functioning (ie efficient roads, railways etc), as the colony seems to operate perfectly well with all its buildings crammed together in big clumps. There's very little danger of running out of money, just bump up the birth rate and keep income tax at a reasonable level and the stuff'll pour in faster than you can spend it. The only real bugbear is the occasional meteor collision which can wreck fairly big chunks of your colony, but a quick injection of cash into research soon comes up with a protective laser system which frees you from that problem. Now and again your workers will go on strike for 'better conditions' but there doesn't seem to be anything you can actually do about this (it isn't even mentioned in the manual) and after a few days they seem to cheer up and go back to work of their own volition.

This eclectic approach to labour relations, though, is just one of a number of slightly worrying buglets in *Utopia*. You might remember I mentioned fusion cruisers earlier on? After I increased their research budget substantially, my military engineers proudly announced that they'd come up with just such a craft, one which would never need refuelling. Deeply excited, I built a couple and made to send them off on a mission, only to be informed that 'That ship does not have fuel to follow your orders'. Although all my other spaceships were flying around happily the mighty fusion cruiser simply refused to budge, and a close study of the manual failed to reveal any special requirements it might have. Not that that stopped the scientists informing me for the next three hours of their wonderful discovery.

The most irritating bug I found, though, was a geographical one. Having funded my spying operation to a ridiculous level, I was informed of an alien city to the south-east of my colony. I built up huge defences in the south-east and sent off squadrons of tanks to attack the aliens, and they all duly trundled off in that direction. Minutes later, the aliens attacked in huge numbers – from the north-west. Now maybe this was an example of their tactical acumen, but it seems plain unfair to me. There are other bugs, but these are the worst I encountered, and I don't want to go on about the negative aspects of the game too much.

Utopia is still appealing on a very basic (l)egomaniac level, the rewarding nature of building things providing a lot of immediate enjoyment. Despite the forbidding manual it's accessible too (much like *Sim City* was), but at the end of the day it seems to be dangerously lacking in actual game. Building things up is all very well, but if they just keep getting knocked back down again time and time again you may end up getting a little bored. •***STUART CAMPBELL***

UPPERS Looks good, there's lots to do, it's slick and easy to get into. The balance between sedate city-building and desperate defence is potentially an excellent one.

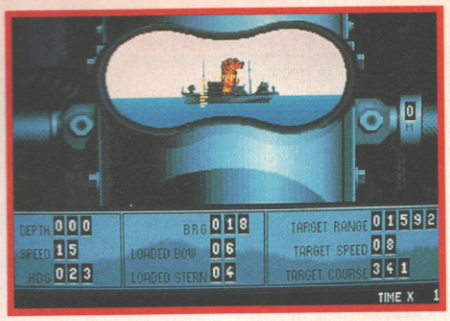
DOWNERS Relatively small screen area makes it easy to lose perspective, so that you don't generally have a natural feel for where everything in your city is, but the one really major flaw is the lack of solid results, either in battles or in general.

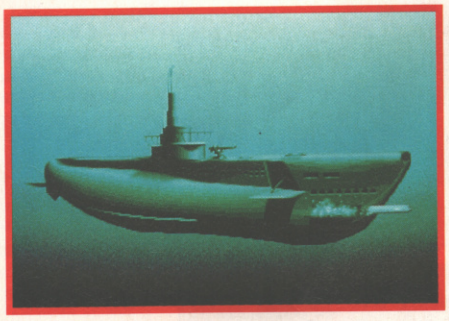
THE BOTTOM LINE

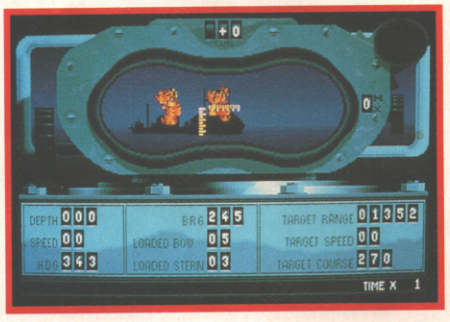
I wanted to like this, and deep down I do, but the perpetual nature isn't really suited to a game where battles are such a major element. Compared to *Mega lo Mania* it lacks direction, and compared to *Sim City* it lacks depth. It's good, I'd say very good even, just not *that* good.

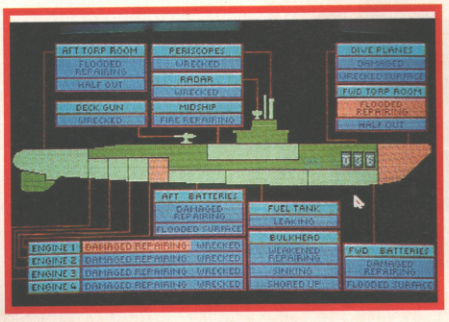
81 PERCENT

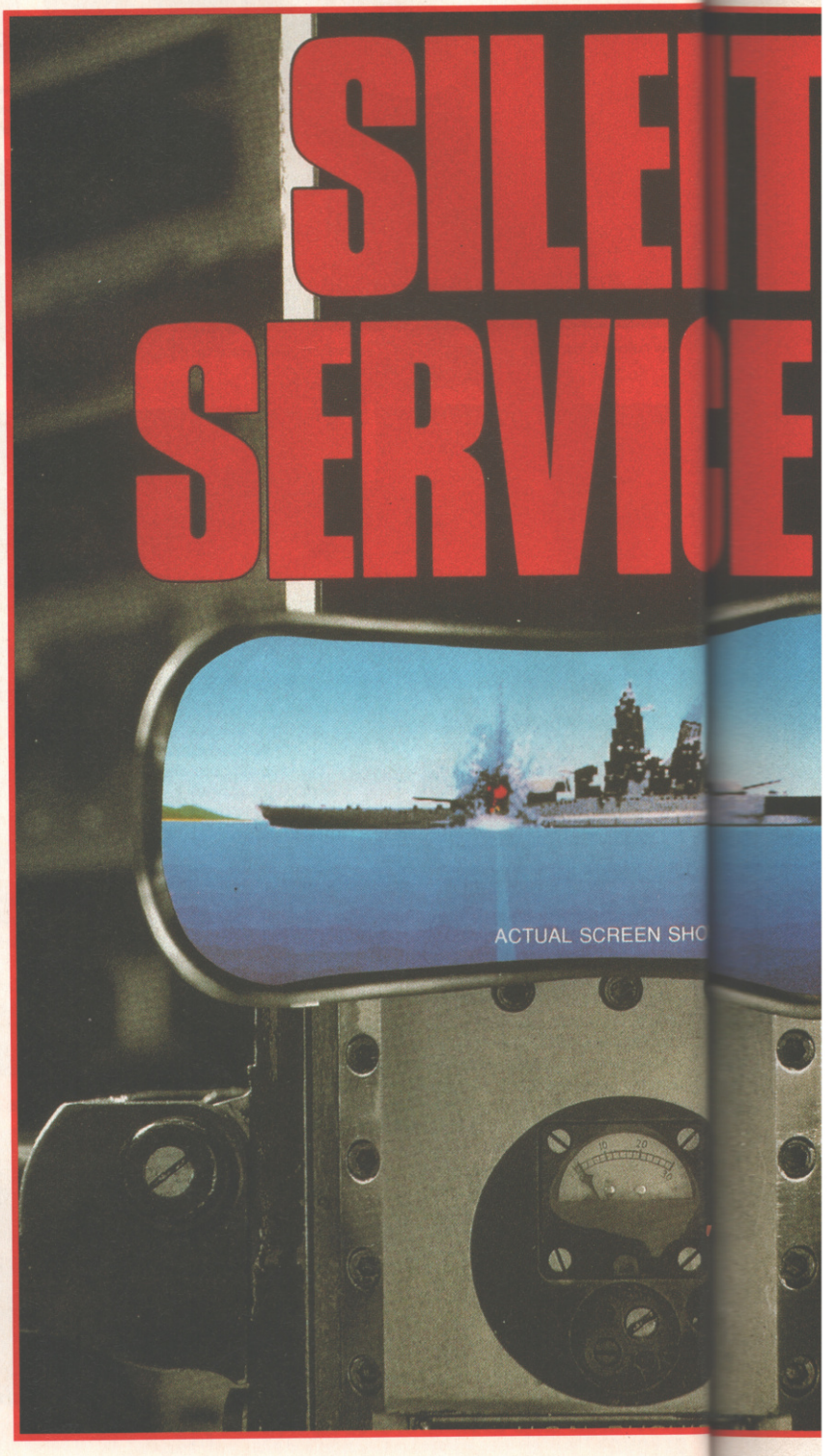
RUN SILE N







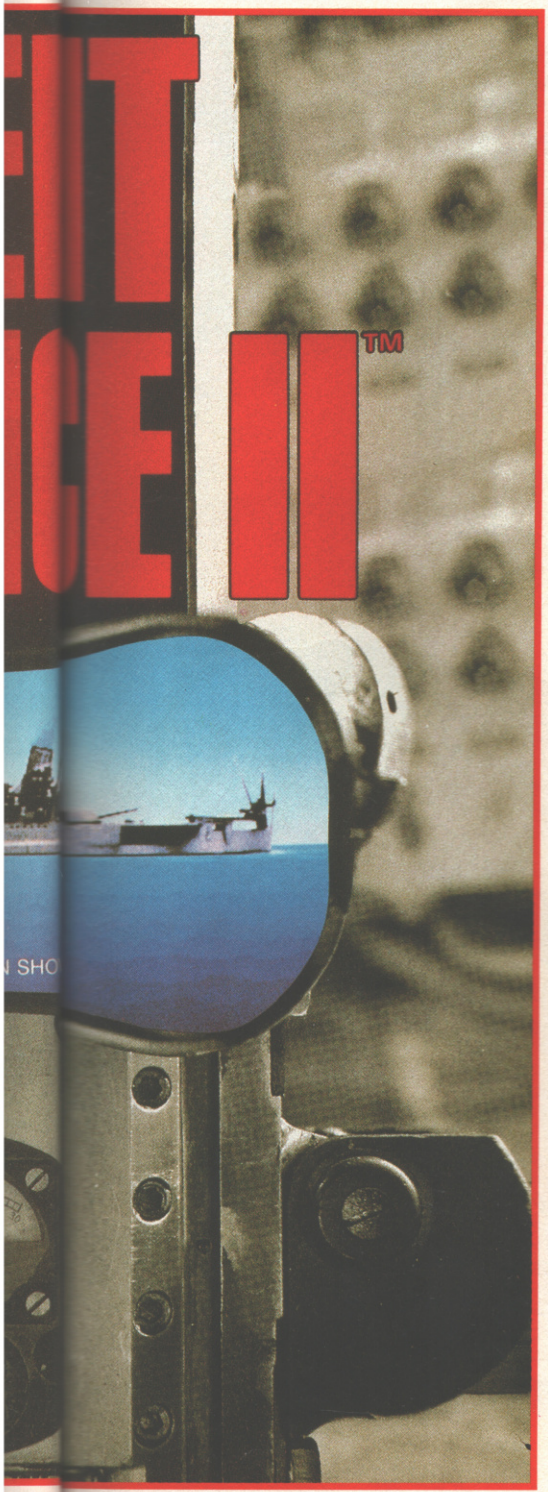




IBM and Amiga screen shots shown.

Silent Service II will be surfacing at all good software stores foyour C

NT, RUN DEEP.



Being in the American "Silent Service" of World War II was to pursue a career filled with action, danger and glory. All alone, deep inside enemy territory, submarine captains stalked and attacked the Japanese Pacific Fleet, the world's most successful navy. Over four years, the brave men of the Silent Service heroically strangled Japan's maritime economy and destroyed her shipping.

The Pacific war was won from beneath the waves.

Silent Service won critical and popular acclaim as the era's definitive simulation when it was released in 1985. Now the all-new **Silent Service II** picks up where its predecessor left off, using advances in computer technology to give you even greater realism and atmosphere. With enhanced, digitised graphics, state-of-the-art sounds and thrilling new game options - including a 'War Career' option to fight the entire South Pacific campaign- Silent Service II is an historically accurate simulation of the WWII submariner's decisions, fears and triumphs.

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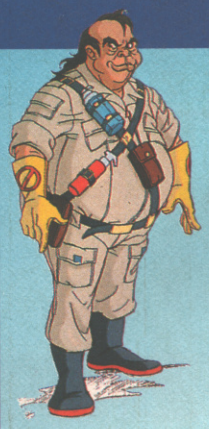

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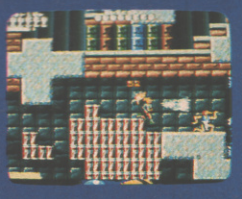

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GODS

Complete control

Here it is – the final part of our guide to *Gods*. Once again Bitmap Eric Matthews and our own Stuart Campbell are the men in the know. Numbers in brackets refer to the pictures presented in a block over the page.

It's out with the old and in with the new this month in Complete Control. Out go *Prince Of Persia* and *Gods*, the epic solutions to which reach their conclusions this issue, while in comes – what? Flick the page to find out...

Level Three, World One
Go right and down the ladder, then go up the next ladder and down into the pit to the right. Kill the monster to get the time bomb. Go up the ladder and right, then pull the lever to move the floor block. Go down and pull the lever to open the trap door. Throw the bomb down twice to kill the beehive, then drop down through the trap door and pull the lever.

Go right, pull the lever and go through the door to get the maces and door key. Retrace your steps to the ladder leading to the pit where you got the time bomb, then go up the ladder and down the next one, then pull the lever beside the door to your left.

Continue going down and left until you reach the next door. Pull the lever to open it, then keep going up and left until you come to the room with three levers and trapdoors **(1)**. Pull the middle lever to get to the gold bowl. Now go back down the ladder to the door, collect the teleport key and pull the lever, go through the door and collect the power-up and key.

Now go right, opening any doors you may come across (you should fall down one gap too) until you can go no further. Pull the nearest lever to you **(2)** and go through the door, then go through the door you'll find yourself beside.

Now go right and down the ladder, go right and pull the first lever you see. This will give you the wide arc. Go through the door and fire **(3)** so that your weapons break the blocks in the ceiling, allowing the zap, energy and gold key to drop down. Go right and open the door.

Hidden puzzles
1. To find the shortcut
Go down to just beyond the first lever then return to the start and collect the trap key. Go to the just above the pit where the time bomb is found , then go up the ladder that's slightly to the right. A block should move, allowing you to go right and down for a bit (through one door), then pull the lever and collect the maces, treasure key and wide arc. Go to the final room (go through doors then go down and right) and receive a power-up.

2. To find hidden treasure
Look to the ceiling of the final room.

The Shop
Buy power-up.

Level Three, World Two
You have to collect the fire, ice and water gems to illuminate the lights in the central room **(4)**. The fire gem will be stolen by the thief at the top of the second ladder. First, climb up and right until you reach the top of the long ladder.

Open the door, go right, and go down the ladder. Pull the lever, go through the door, go left and up, and pull the first lever you come to to open the trap doors above. Kill the thief and take the gem.

Go up the ladder and go through the door to the right. This will take you to the light room. Go right, open the door **(5)**, then go up and right. Enter the room and pull the first lever to open the door. Pull the third lever and walk left to collect the shield. Pull the second lever to move the block to the right, allowing you to enter the treasure room.

Reset the first lever of the set of three to open the trap door on the left and collect the ice gem. Go left and down the first ladder. Go right and pull the two levers, then go down the ladder to the right. Pull the lever and reset it to blow up the trap. Collect the water gem then go back up to the light room to exit.

Hidden puzzles
1. To find the massive treasure chest
By the lever to the right of the set of three (to the right of the light room), there is a hidden switch. Press it, and find the other two in World 3 for a massive bonus.

2. To stop the thief
The thief who steals the fire gem can be stopped with a 'freeze alien' potion from the shop or zapped by pulling the first lever you come to.

Level Three, World Three
The first part of the puzzle is to find and collect two vessels and take them to the final door. Do not pull any levers that you're not told to.

Go right and down the first ladder. Collect the flask and go up the ladder, then go right and up the ladder, then right to collect the ceramic pot. Fall down and go as far right as you can.

Pull the nearest lever and collect the trap key. Go left to the next lever and pull it, and jump up to collect the world key **(6)**, then go right then down to the far right lever and reset it to exit.

Hidden puzzles
1. To find extra potions
Pull the first two levers to see what happens when you pull the levers at the end of the suspended platform to the right of the start **(7)**, then try resetting them. Be careful of spikes appearing beneath you.

Eek! It's a giant Minotaur from the end of Level Three, World Three. Run, run away! (And watch he don't jump on your head).

2. To get an extra life
Pull the first lever, go right quickly, and then pull the lever you'll find under the suspended platform.

Boss Guy
The Minotaur is fairly straightforward, being rather similar to the Centurion in Level One. The added complication is that the Minotaur can jump on your head if you're not careful. When the Minotaur jumps, run underneath and behind him towards the right, then repeat when he jumps back to the right. To time the jump, watch for the Minotaur stepping backwards. When he does this, he will then step forward, shoot and jump.

The Shop
Best to buy maces, fireballs, hunters and power potions.

Level Four, World One
Make your way to the top of the room and destroy the block that the door key is resting on. Collect the key and pull the lever beside the door. Drop down through the opening above the trap. A moving block will appear and save you from falling onto the spike. Go through the door to the right, jump across onto the ladder and go down. Destroy the blocks to the left then pull the lever. Use the zap to kill the monsters then go back up the ladder to collect the room key **(8)**. Keep going down and left until you come to another door. Go through it to enter the trap room **(9)**. Quickly jump up to your left and pull the lever. This stops the moving block from knocking the world key into the traps. (If it does, you'll need to use the trap key to get the bomb to destroy them). Exit the trap room by the door at the top, then go up and left to make your way to the world end.

Hidden puzzles
1. To find a gold treasure chest
Use the trap key from the trap room to move the block to the left of the trap room entrance and allow you to go down into a pit **(10)**, where you'll find a gold treasure chest. You will also find another trap key to move a block halfway up to the world end.

The Shop
Buy maces, fireballs, hunters and power potions.

Level Four, World Two
In world two you must collect the three alchemical implements and return them to the alchemist's room.

Go right, down the stairs, and jump onto the breakable blocks. Walk right, being careful not to release the trapped monsters, then go down the ladder and collect the gold bowl (dropped by a monster) **(12)**. Go down and right, pull the lever and go through the door.

Climb up to the highest lever **(13)** and pull it, collecting the potion on the way. Now pull the lever immediately below, which will trigger the thief who carries the pestle and mortar. Go to the lever by the door and drop the potion.

Kill the thief and collect the mortar and pestle, then pull the lever and go through the door. Walk left and pull the lever, go left and pull the next lever and

If you think the Minotaur was bad, check out this mutha! It's the final guardian.

drop down. Go down and left as far as you can, and collect the door key from behind the breakable blocks.

Go up the ladder and pull the first lever, then go left through the door and collect the lamp. Now go back to the right, (you'll have to shoot a couple of breakable blocks), down the ladder and right. Pull the lever at the top of the steps, collecting the trap door key on the way. Climb the ladder, collect the world key and exit to the right.

Hidden puzzles

1. To enter the bonus section

There is a bonus section which can be entered by collecting the room key from the section above the first door **(11)** and then pulling the first lever after you've collected it. Voila! Instant riches.

2. To find a free familiar

Collect the oil lamp from the bonus section and pull the first lever on the first set of steps to get a familiar.

Level Four, World Three

In this world you simply need to find and collect the world key.

Go left and kill the dog which appears at the bottom of the first ladder to reveal a spear. You will need to be carrying this when you pull the first lever in order to move the block. Now reset the lever to open the door and go through.

Go down, pull the lever, go through the door and pull the other lever. Go through the door then go left, up the ladder, down the next ladder, and go left until you're at the set of three levers. Pull the leftmost one then go back to the door you just came from and go through it.

Collect the world key and power potion and go up the ladder. You'll now be back at the second lever. Go through the level again to the set of three levers **(14)**, then continue left, fall into the treasure room, go back round again to the three levers and reset the one you pulled earlier. Continue left to the next lever and pull it to enter the final guardian's room.

Hidden puzzles

1. To get the treasure key

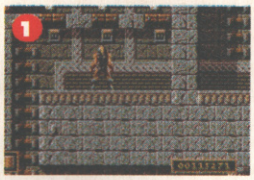
When you get to the first lever, don't kill the thief and he will bring you the treasure room key.

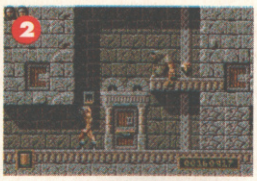
2. To get the axes

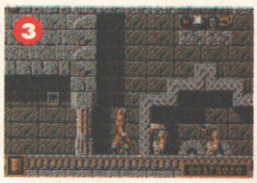
First, you need the thief to get the mace from above the three levers. Pull the leftmost lever to open the trapdoor, then pull the middle one to knock the trap key into the pit below. Reset the leftmost lever to close the trap door, and pull the rightmost lever to open the trap door by the thief. Wait for the thief to collect the mace and come down to you, kill him and collect it. Pull the leftmost lever to open the trap door and collect the trap door key. You will now be able to move the block blocking the axes **(15)** and use the mace to break the breakable blocks and let the axes fall. These will make it far easier to kill the final guardian.

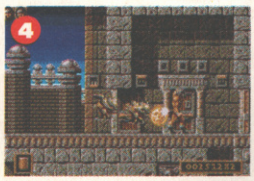
Hurrah! It's the complete end of game screen – you've won, congrats, etc etc.

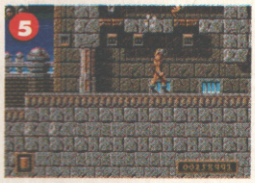
And just so you know what we're talking about, here are a few little pics to help illustrate the, if you will, 'points' made by Eric and Stu in the text.

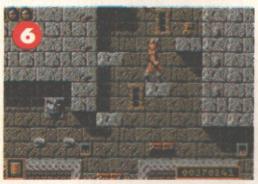


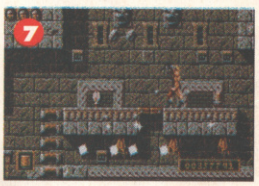


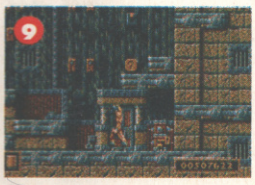


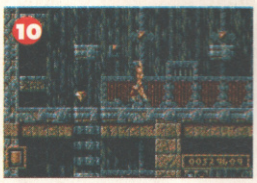


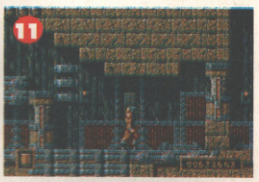


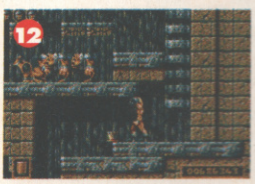


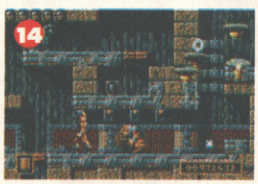












TO

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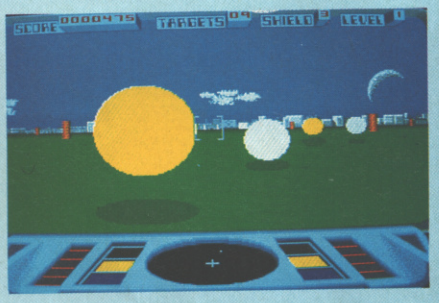
You enter the game on a vast, flat battle arena littered with cylindrical obelisks. You then progress through each level by beating alien attackers and exiting through a space meteorite storm sequence to the next arena. There are eight levels in all, after which you can 'clock' through again, but at each new level – whilst you will meet some familiar faces – the action hots up with more vicious attackers.

Missiles

Heralded by a low, menacing whine and a flashing red panel light. Start backing away from missiles immediately, before you even attempt to get them in your sights. Missiles occur on all levels but – just when you've gained some experience of routinely seeing them off – they gain in intelligence and begin to anticipate your fire to mount much more concerted, prolonged attacks.

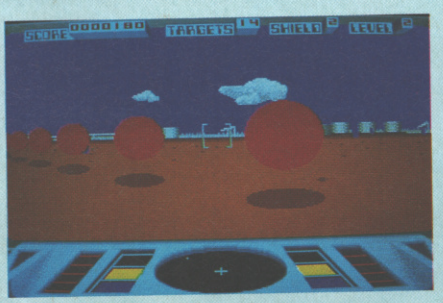


Aliens

The Aliens in the first level are two types of scout-craft which, as you can outrun their shots, offer only token resistance. In fact, your leisurely progress in destroying the number of 'Targets' set for the level is interrupted just occasionally by a homing missile – this opening section of the game shouldn't really cause you too many problems.

ENCOUN

If you're having a tough time with Novagen's fast-moving new *Battlezone* game, you need some expert help – and who could be more expert than the boys at Novagen themselves? No-one, that's who, so without further delay we present these *Amiga Encounter* tips straight from the proverbial horse's mouths...

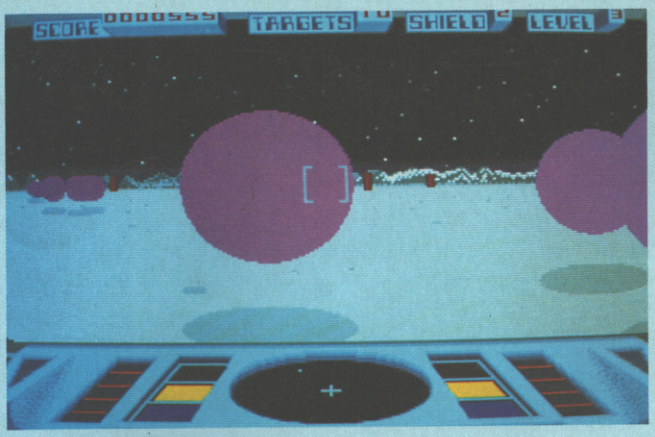


Aggressors

Two new aliens introduced on level two are well equipped to dispose of intruders. You cannot outrun their shots, but must turn their tactics against them. The red Aggressor fires rapid bursts of ten in-line shots. Its green comrade spits out three shot triangles. Since they fire straight at your last recorded position, keep moving. Approach the enemy by keeping it to one side, making forward diagonal adjustments with the joystick. Then, in the brief respite between volleys, turn to face it and squeeze off a few rounds. If you miss and it returns fire, pull back, turning away at the same time. This kind of guerrilla warfare is the essence of the game when the enemy craft is more heavily armed than you.

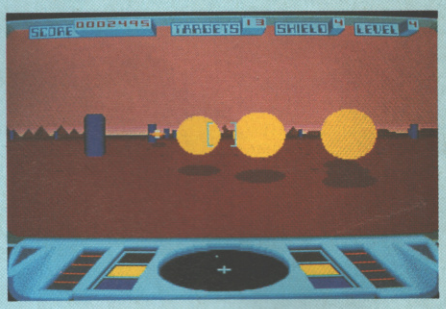
Mother Ship

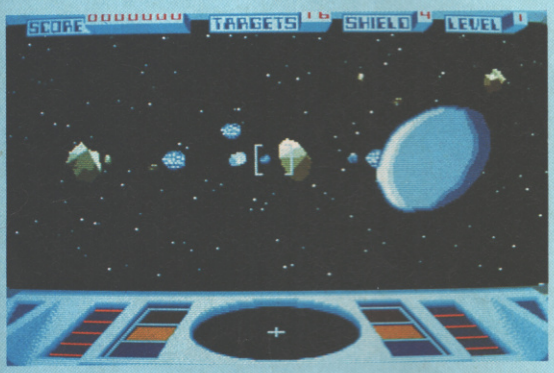
The pink Mother Ship encountered on level three is parent to the green Aggressor from level two. She still has much to teach her offspring in terms of agility and sheer cussedness though.



The Yellow Peril

Surviving the increasingly frenetic passage through the meteorites to arrive on the desert terrain of level four, you meet the Yellow Peril. Firing triangular formations in groups of five, the Peril is best approached for the kill by using cylinders as shields as you dodge forwards. As if this one's not tough enough, level four sees your introduction to The Sentinel. This blue meanie never moves. But then it never stops firing either – a force to be reckoned with. The way to negotiate its demise is to approach diagonally, turn to face it and fire, then almost immediately turn further and power away backwards, still turning, to avoid his barrage of return fire.





Meteorites

On destroying all targets on a level, you exit via a black 'stargate' to be propelled through a hail of meteorites which you must steer through to avoid collision. Predictably, the higher the level reached, the greater the speed and duration and density of meteorites. A good guide to tackling this sequence is to trust that if something is outside of your sights, you are safe. Avoid large sweeping turns, as these tend to end in panic and catastrophe.

TER

Smart Bombs

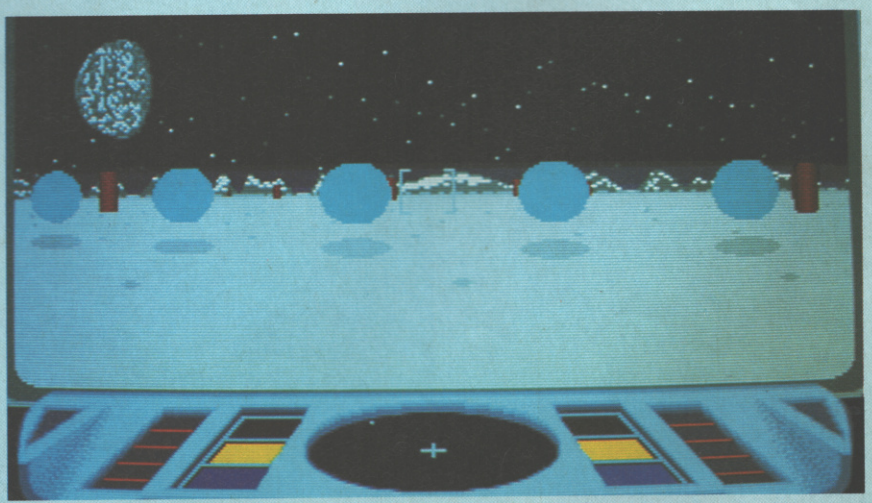
In the arctic wasteland of level three, you meet the Smart Bomb. This metallic blue weapon ticks its countdown to self-destruction when it yields a wall of shots. Changing course suddenly and unexpectedly, it is difficult to shoot. Attempt to despatch the Smart Bomb by spraying the area around it with shots, keeping it directly ahead of you with the aid of your radar. If it blows, either hide behind a cylinder, or be far enough away for the shots reaching you to be so widely spaced you can slip between.

The Black Abbott

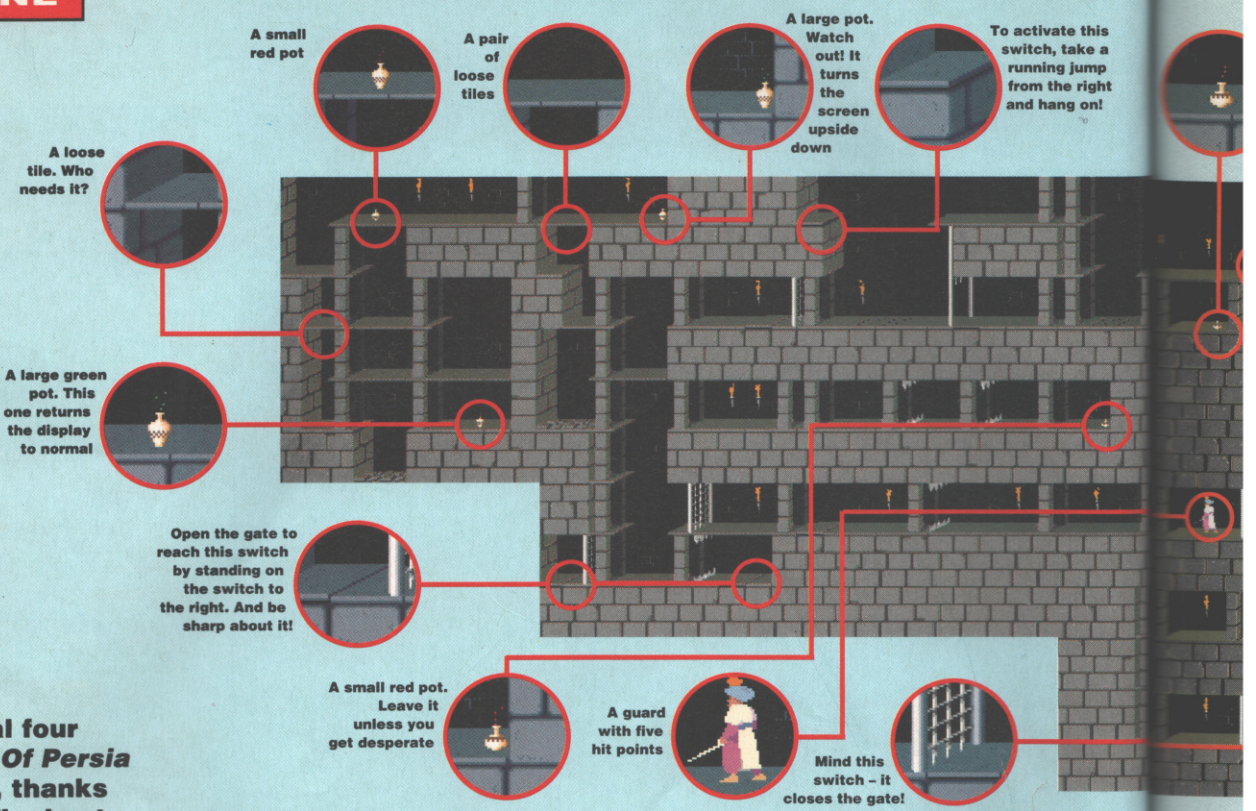
When you finally meet the Black Abbott (you'll know it when you see it), you will have encountered all of the aliens ranged against you. From then on in, they just get faster and harder to beat!

The Remaining Levels

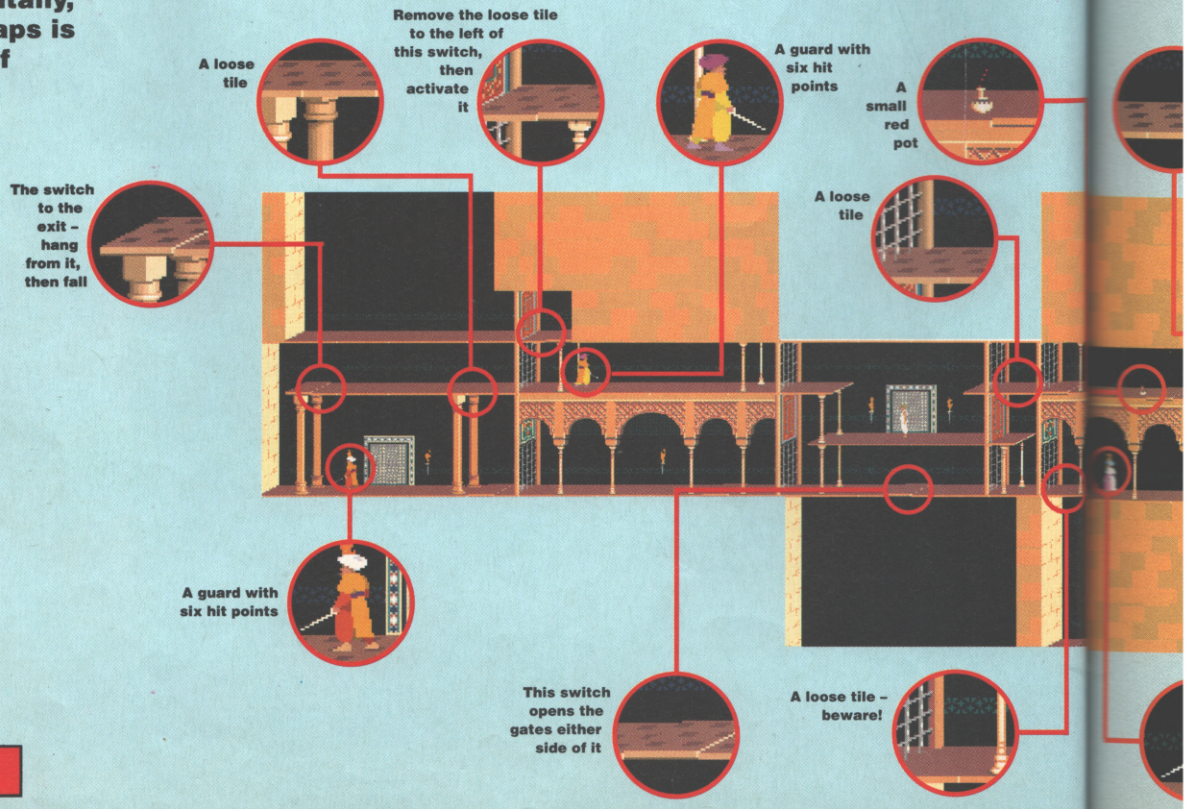
New aliens await. Some are more advanced marques of earlier models, others have new tactics where the best approach is to rebound your fire from the cylinders. The opponents that constantly move and fire relentlessly provide the greatest challenge. With these, sneak an approach in an arc such that the enemy does not move across you as you get near. When very close in, the joystick should be in a diagonal position to keep the enemy position to the side of the screen. Hold down the fire button throughout the chase. Keep trying – the saucer will at some point run into the line of your shots.



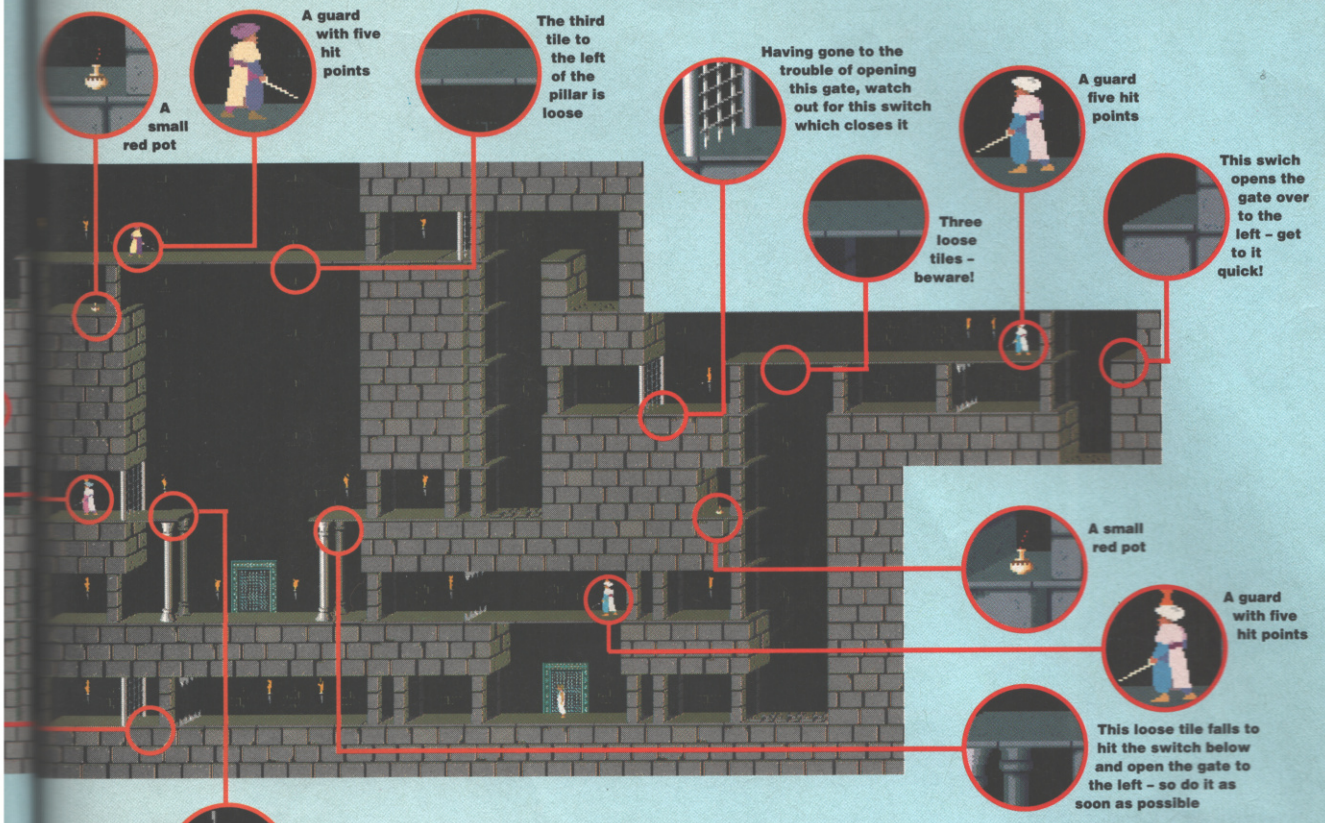
LEVEL NINE



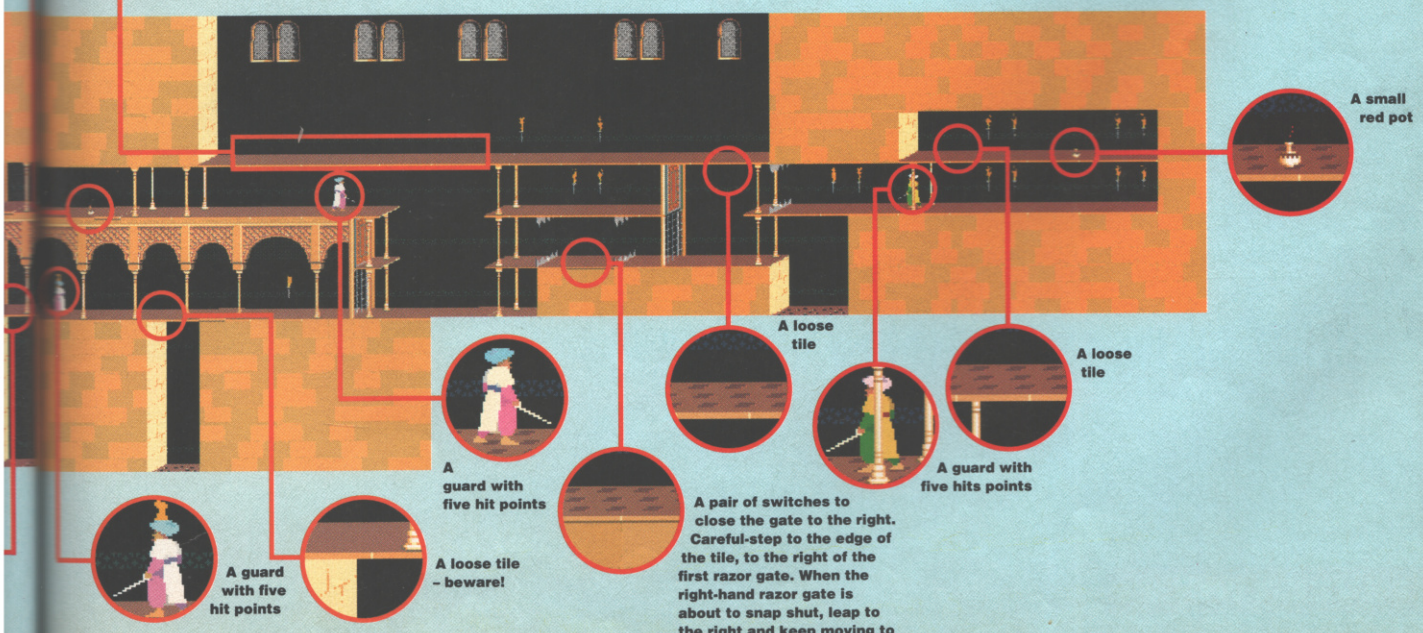
At last – the final four levels of *Prince Of Persia* in all their glory, thanks to Gary Penn. (The best part of the end sequence is also included for your delectation). Incidentally, the 'key' to these maps is found in issue four of AMIGA POWER.



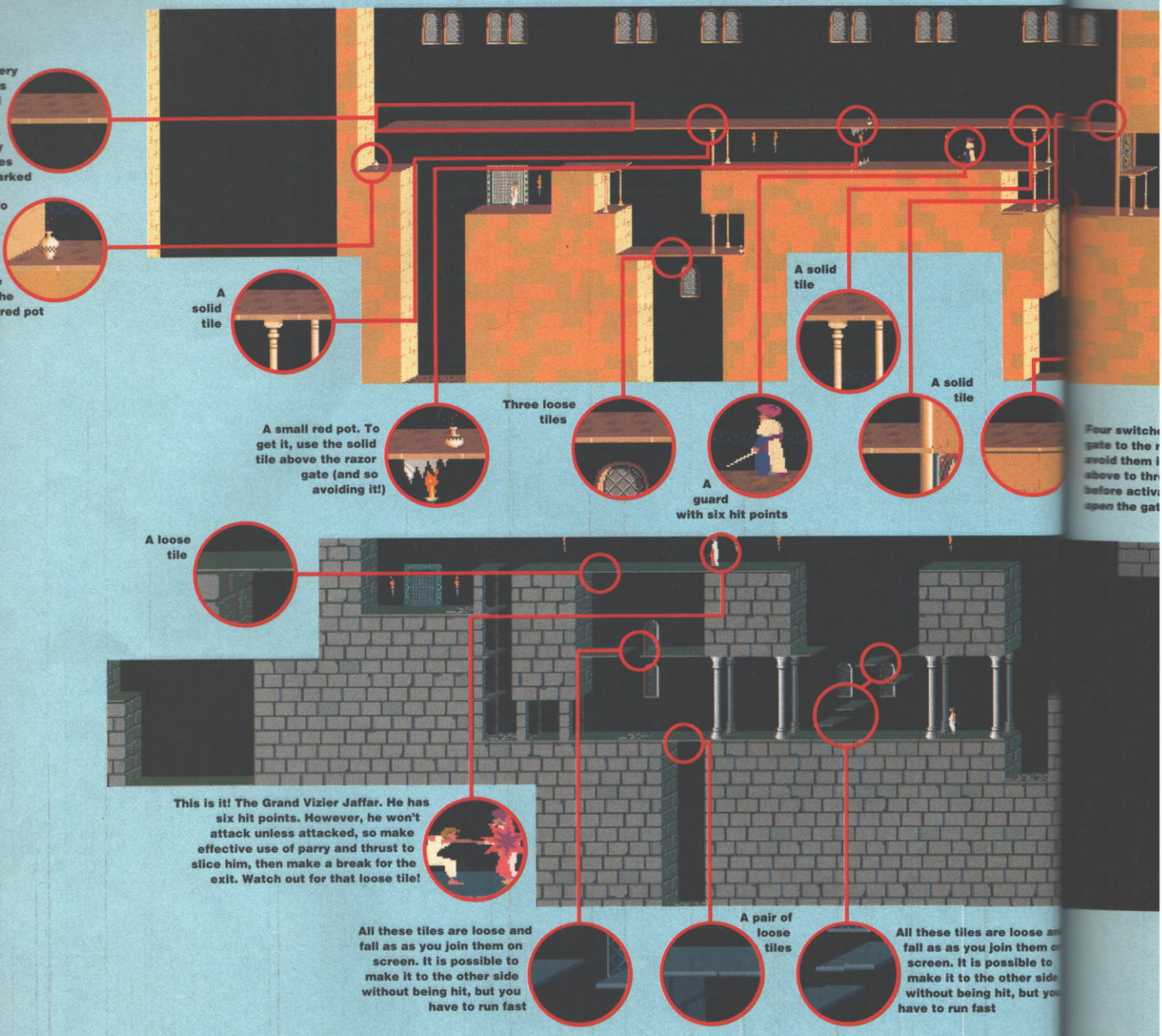
LEVEL TEN

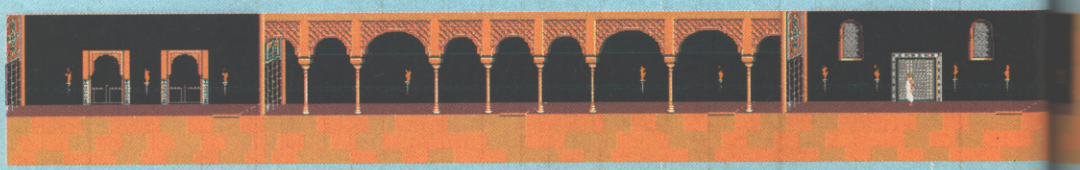


PRINCE OF PERSIA
(PART THREE)



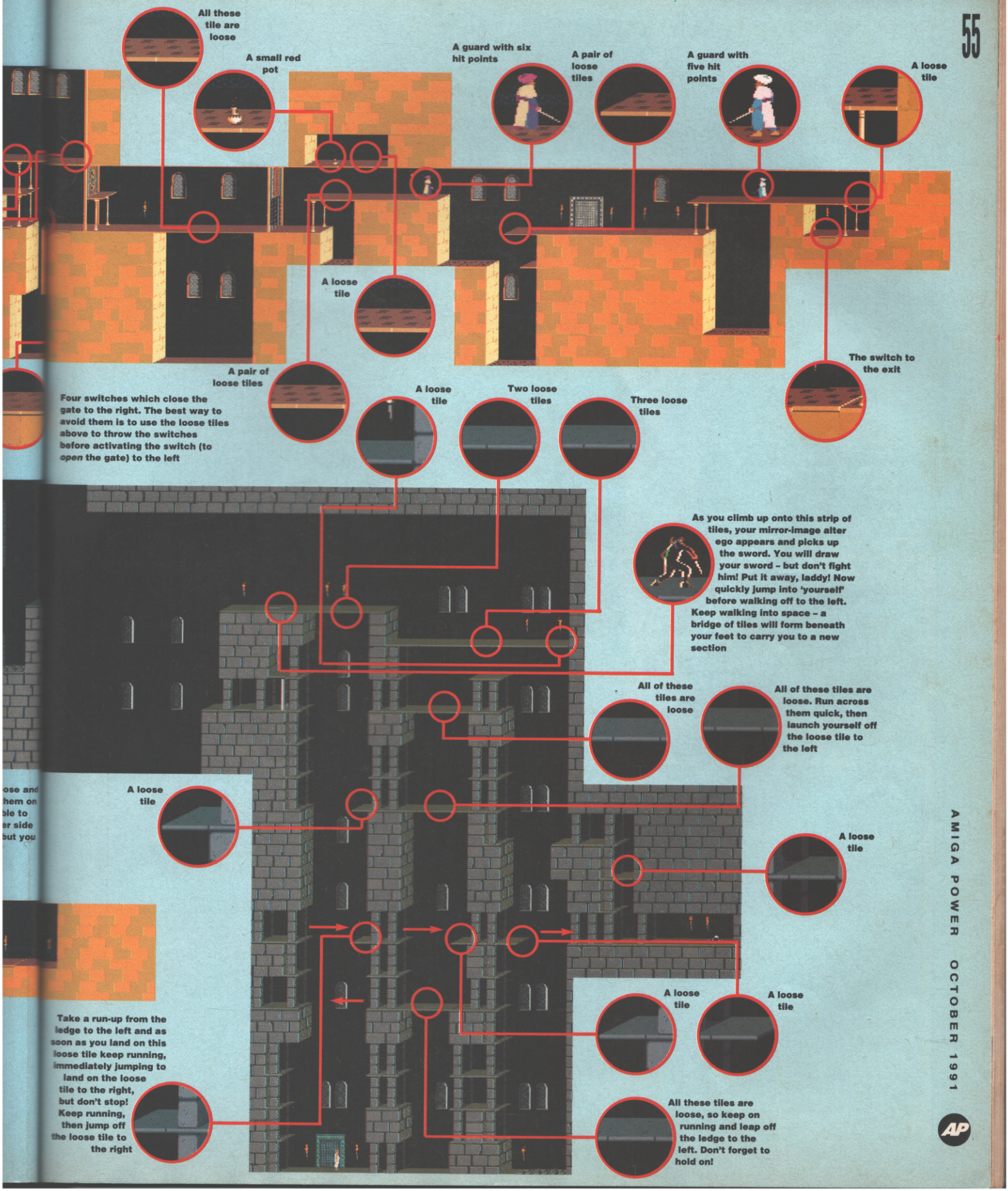
LEVEL ELEVEN





No, this isn't another action-packed level, this is the end, my friend. Simply run along to the far left for a romance-packed meeting with your lady.

LEVEL TWELVE


All these tile are loose
A small red pot
A guard with six hit points
A pair of loose tiles
A guard with five hit points
A loose tile
A loose tile
A pair of loose tiles
The switch to the exit
Four switches which close the gate to the right. The best way to avoid them is to use the loose tiles above to throw the switches before activating the switch (to *open* the gate) to the left
A loose tile
Two loose tiles
Three loose tiles
As you climb up onto this strip of tiles, your mirror-image alter ego appears and picks up the sword. You will draw your sword – but don't fight him! Put it away, laddy! Now quickly jump into 'yourself' before walking off to the left. Keep walking into space – a bridge of tiles will form beneath your feet to carry you to a new section
All of these tiles are loose
All of these tiles are loose. Run across them quick, then launch yourself off the loose tile to the left
A loose tile
A loose tile
A loose tile
A loose tile
Take a run-up from the ledge to the left and as soon as you land on this loose tile keep running, immediately jumping to land on the loose tile to the right, but don't stop! Keep running, then jump off the loose tile to the right
All these tiles are loose, so keep on running and leap off the ledge to the left. Don't forget to hold on!

BLADE WARRIOR

What's that I hear? Is that the voice of a thousand readers calling as one for a complete solution to Image Works' atmospheric arcade adventure *Blade Warrior*? Thought so.
'Oi, Image Works!'
'Yes, AMIGA POWER?'
'How about a complete solution for *Blade Warrior*, then?'
'Oh, alright then. Here.'

1. Gather enough ingredients then make the HEAL and WATER spells.
2. Visit the West Wizard. Trade ingredients for the TRAVELE spell and then again for the AMULET of the MOON.
3. Make the TRAVELE spell.
4. Get the key found near the Swamp Wizard's tower.
5. Go to Ginti's Amulet. Get the key. Kill the skeleton guards and grab the Amulet.
6. Visit the Swamp Wizard. Trade the Amulet for a tablet fragment.
7. Collect the silver ring from the South Wizard level, killing the skeleton guards and grabbing the ring as you go. Visit the South Wizard. Trade ingredients for a Stone Flute.
8. Go to the NE top corner of the map and get the Veritas leaf.
9. Visit the Pine Wizard. Trade ingredients for another Stone Flute.
10. Trade the Veritas leaf for the Name.
11. Trade 'air' ingredients with the West Wizard for the SMOKE and EARTHE spells – you'll need these later on.
12. Go to the top of the map and find the bee hive. Cast SMOKE spell and then attack the hive. Collect the crystal.
13. Go to the West Wizard. Trade the ring for a tablet fragment.
14. Go to the North Wizard. Trade either Flute for the Helmet. Trade the TALISMAN of the MOON for a tablet fragment.
15. Go to the East Wizard. Trade the Helmet for the TRAVELE spell (you already have this but the Wizard must already have the helmet for the next trade to work). Trade the Name for a tablet fragment.
16. On the East Wizard's tower level are flying banshees. When you are attacked by one, immediately cast EARTHE at it and follow it, casting EARTHE at it until it is destroyed. Take the Banshee Wail (you need to cast EARTHE six times to do this).
17. Go to the Palace Wizard. Trade the Wail for a tablet fragment.
18. Go to the path that the Sorceror's tower is on. Find and take the Swamp Fish Sparkle.
19. Trade the Sparkle for a tablet fragment with the Pine Wizard.
20. Go to the South Wizard and trade the Crystal for a tablet fragment.
21. Visit the Sorceror and he will charge your sword.
22. Find Murk and kill him with the charged sword. The End!

OTHER NOTES

You can encounter Murk during the game. Each time you defeat him he will come back stronger the next time. If possible, try to avoid fighting him until the end, then he will be at his weakest.
The orchid and humming bird are not required to finish the game, and you actually only need to collect one of the two Stone Flutes.
The Dragon spittle may be hard to find! (Or at least, that's what it says here).
Different monsters require different attacking 'moves' to destroy them. Learn which are most effective. The best strategy is to move into the monsters to hit them as the strike will be more effective than if you fight them from a distance and allow them to back off.
Travelling from your own tower on the back of a dragon may take you back to the last tower you visited, depending on the mood of your dragon. Travelling from any other tower will always return you to your home tower, if you survive the attack of the harpies.
Save your game regularly. Only six different saves are allowed on each blank disk that you use.

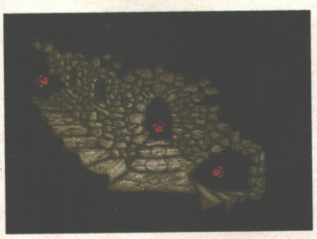
THE TABLET FRAGMENTS

The following Wizards want the following items to trade for their tablet fragments.

SWAMP WIZARD wants Ginti's Amulet
WEST WIZARD wants the Silver Ring
NORTH WIZARD wants the Talisman of the Moon
EAST WIZARD wants the Helmet and the Name
PALACE WIZARD wants the Banshee's Wail
PINE WIZARD wants the Swamp Fish Sparkle
SOUTH WIZARD wants the Crystal

COMPLETING BLADE WARRIOR ABRIDGED VERSION

From your tower...


...nip down the stairs...

...go outside...

...take a bit of a stroll up the hill...

...through the portal...

...across the bridge...

...pop in to see a wizard...

...and fly back home. Repeat to fade...

HERO QUES

If you're still struggling through Gremlin's excellent board game conversion like some kind of highly strung soft boy, you might be able to hold your head up again in public if you use these tips kindly supplied by the game's programmer...

1. Play the maze several times to gain cash fast.
2. Save up cash to buy the crossbow.
3. Note that you don't have to be in the same room as the enemy to use the crossbow, you just need to have a line of sight to the target.
4. Don't buy the plate armour, although it gives good protection, as it slows you down. Buy chain mail instead.
5. Buy the tool kit for when traps stand in your way.
6. A good way to keep your character healthy is to create the wizard, making sure he has the water and earth spells, then when you start the quest cast the healing spells on your player and then send the wizard through the stairs.
7. In 'The Rescue Of Sir Ragnar', kill all the creatures on your way in so that the path is clear for Sir Ragnar to escape.
8. In 'Lair Of The Orc Warlord', you'll find there is a very useful potion in the cupboard to the west.
9. In 'Prince Magnus's Gold', kill all the creatures on the way in, as you will be too weighed down by all your gold on the return journey.
10. In 'Melar's Maze' there is a magical item on the west side of the dungeon.
11. In 'Legacy Of The Orc Warlord' your items are in the room to the east.
12. In 'The Stone Hunter', Borin's armour can be found up in the northwest area of the map.
13. In 'The Fire Mage' there is a treasure chest to the east.
14. In 'Race Against Time' use the southern door to get riches, or the western door to just get out.
15. In 'Castle Of Mystery', don't collect the gold, as it's Fools Gold – and so worthless – and you won't be able to attack while carrying it.
16. Don't buy the shield because one can be found in 'Bastion Of Chaos'.
17. Search for the secret door to find the holder of the Star Of The West.
18. Use the spirit blade when fighting the undead, as it is very powerful against them.
19. Kill off the Witchlord's henchmen with the crossbow before you attack him with the spirit blade.
20. There is – surprise, surprise! – no tip number 20. (Sorry).

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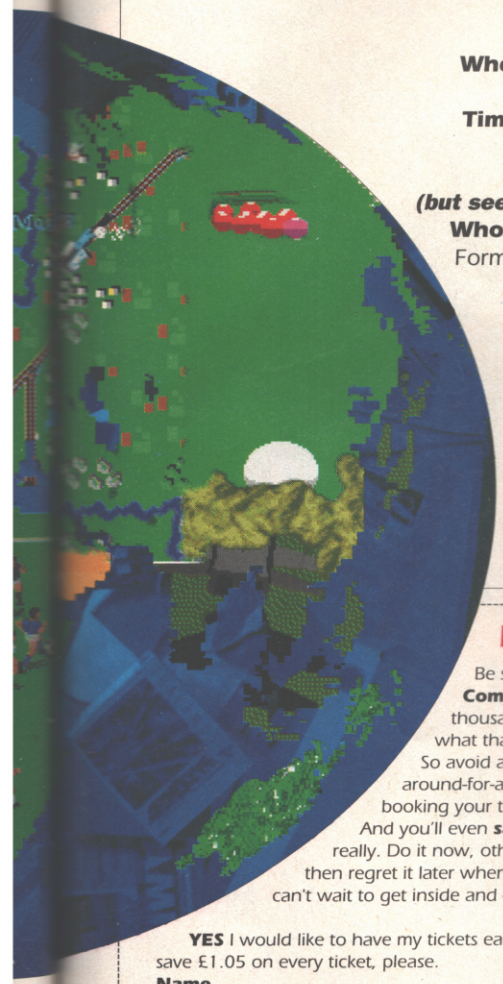

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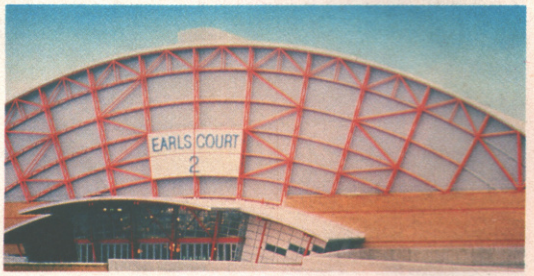

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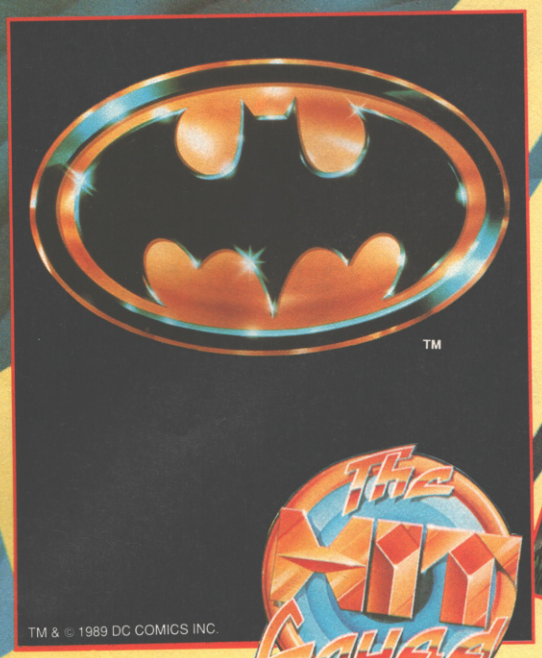
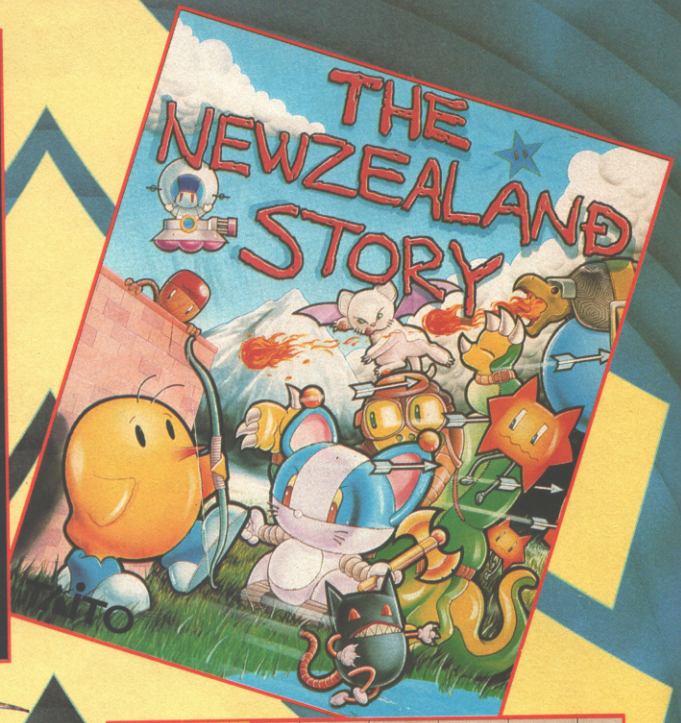
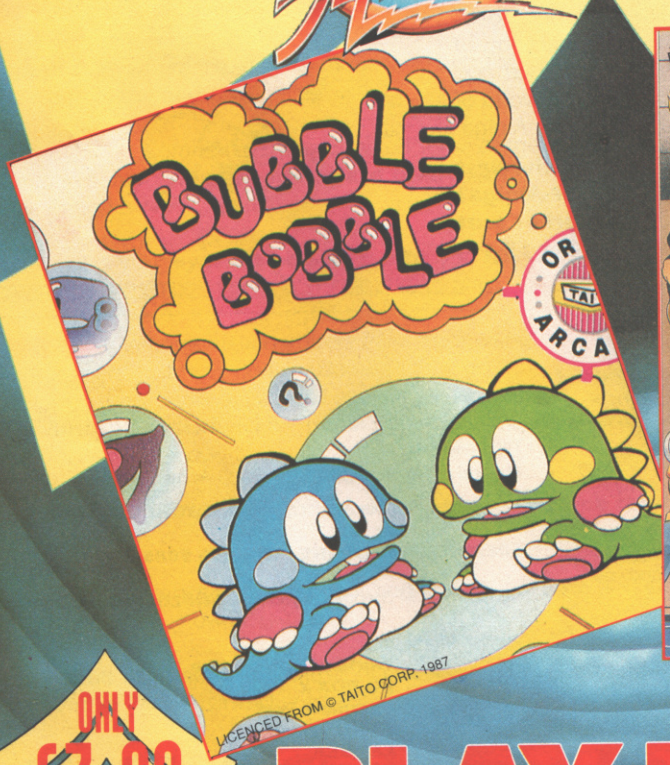




The Hit Squad



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US Gold, one of the real giants of the UK software industry, have just enjoyed their most successful year ever on the Amiga. *Eye Of The Beholder*, *Cybercon III*, and the incredible *The Secret Of Monkey Island* – quite simply three of the best games of this or any year – have lead the way of course, but with *Cruise For A Corpse*, *The Godfather* and *Indiana Jones And The Fate Of Atlantis* amongst the goodies to come, it's a winning run that doesn't look likely to end just yet. Colin Campbell and Mark Ramshaw went to look at the games to come, while Matt Bielby talked to the man behind it all, Geoff Brown...

work IN PROGRESS

Golden Brown

You sometimes still have to tell people US Gold isn't an American company. That confident metallic logo with the stars on, the seemingly endless range of products, the sheer size of the thing – they don't smack of a company based in Birmingham, which was no doubt exactly the idea when Geoff and Anne Brown started our eight years ago.

Of course, the fact that they still deal with a lot of American developed product may have something to do with it too – though this isn't the over-involved military hardware simulator or the sloppily programmed eight disk arcade game we've become used to. No, it's the really professional stuff. You'd be hard pushed to find a games development set up in the world to compete with Lucasfilm, say, for sheer quality and class, and it's the association with the likes of this that has helped US Gold's image tremendously over the last couple of years.

No-one associates the name US Gold with lack lustre CapCom coin-op conversions any more – you'd have to hold some massive chip on your shoulder against them to do so really, when they've been involved in a good proportion of the best games we've seen in the past few months. No one has held a candle to them for sheer consistent quality this year.

The question is, can they keep it up? Yes, there are good number of real must-buy products on their books for the end of this year and the beginning of the next – *Indiana Jones And The Fate Of Atlantis* promises to be the best adventure game ever, no question – but between then and now it's peak release period time, with plenty of time (and plenty of products) for things to go wrong. Are the upcoming coin-op conversions, for instance, going to let the side down a bit, or not? Time we took a look-see, don't you think..?

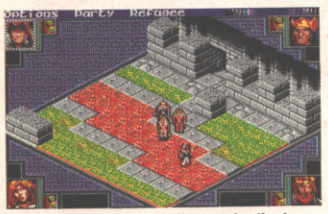
BOB MALIN
PR Manager for SSI New World products

Shadow Sorcerer

The first thing to explain about *Shadow Sorcerer* is that the Amiga version hasn't even been written yet. Bob Malin, Product Manager for SSI and New World games explains, "The ST version will take us about three days to convert, the Amiga a little longer. We expect to have it ready in under two months."

That's a pretty stupendous rate of conversion. Surely, things can't always be that easy.

"This is a UK product. It's being handled by a guy called Graham Lilley, the man responsible for *Heroes Of The Lance*. SSI in the States take at least three months to convert something from the PC to the Amiga. They couldn't believe the



***Shadow Sorcerer*'s 3D isometric display. He we see a citadel entrance.**

rate at which we do things."

It looks like a bit for a departure from the usual Dungeons & Dragons game-style. A bid for the mass market, perhaps?

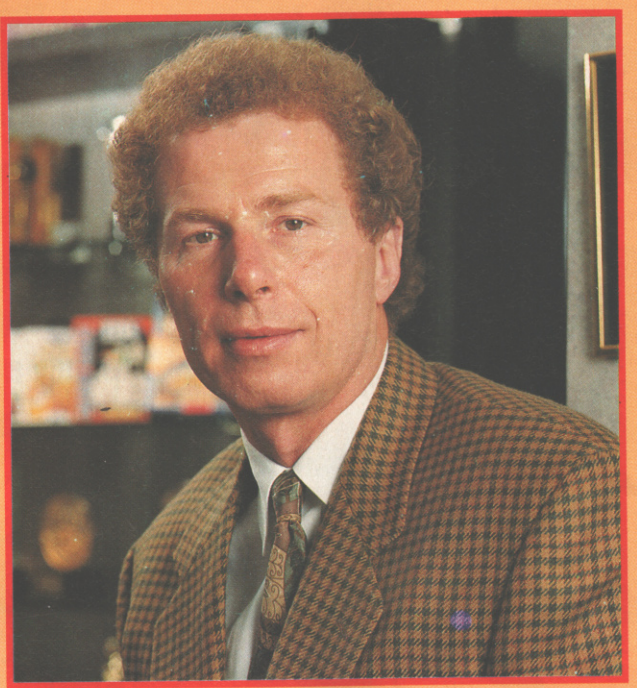
"With *Shadow Sorcerer* we've tried to make things much simpler, more accessible to the average gamesplayer. It was originally even more action-based, but liaising with SSI in America the role-playing angle has become more prominent again. I think that their input has improved it tremendously."

The most obvious point of reference – visually anyway – is Gremlin's *Hero Quest*. Using a large scale map-screen and a close-view 3D isometric play area, everything is mouse controlled. Spells are readied and fighting tactics planned, all

Casting a web spell at the nasties gives them something to think about.

work IN PROGRESS

BEACH HEAD, LUCASFILM AND



In 1983 Geoff Brown set up what's become one of the most successful leisure software outfits this country has ever seen – by importing American games. Today he's not only in charge of one of Europe's biggest games distributors, his software company US Gold is selling British games in America under the most yankee sounding of labels. "It sounds like you've had a pretty busy eight years," suggests an impressed Matt Bielby...

You used to be a musician, didn't you?

Yes, for about 12 years until I was 32. I used to play keyboards and guitar for a band called *Muscles*. We were a bit like *Level 42* I suppose, but we disbanded when it became obvious we weren't going to make it.

And a programmer too?

Yes, on mainframes for two years, then I was a teacher of computer science, and even wrote a couple of games on the C64 and Atari 800. We started Centresoft, the sister company to US Gold, in 1983 by importing American games from people like Cosmi, Access and MicroProse – we were the first people in the country to do that, I think – and then formed US Gold as an offshoot to convert the games to cassette versions and eventually to the Spectrum and Amstrad. The name simply came from the idea of American software and that it should all be good quality stuff – hence the 'Gold' bit. Things have now gone full circle and we're selling our own UK original product in the States, but under the US Gold banner, which is slightly odd.

What were the first games you did?

The first one we converted was, I think, *Beach Head*, with *Bruce Lee* and *The Forbidden Forest* soon after. It's been nice because people who were our rivals at the time have come up to us since and said *Beach Head* totally changed their ideas of what Commodore 64 games could be like. They say they scrapped all their existing products and started again when they saw it.

Which side of the business do you find most interesting – the distribution aspect, or developing and marketing products with US Gold?

The development's intrinsically more interesting, and I like to have a very hands-on involvement with it – I know all our current projects and what stage they're at and so on – but in business organisation terms we've done some very innovative things with Centresoft. Centresoft turns over more money, but in terms of profit the two companies make a similar amount. Some years US Gold makes more, some years Centresoft.

US Gold seemed to slump a bit and not know where it was going a few years ago, but has since made a big comeback. What do you put this down to?

I think we had only one year when we were fairly directionless, around 1989. The market was changing then, 16-bit really becoming important, everyone worrying about consoles, and it took us a bit of time to adjust. You have to keep ahead of the game in this industry or you might as well give up, and happily we managed to pull ourselves back together and on top again. The retailers and so on in CTW (Computer Trade Weekly – the industry trade paper) recently voted us games publisher of the year, which is nice recognition that we're doing something right.

One thing that seemed to go pretty much out of the window was all your coin-op based product?

Well, yes and no. We've got another spate of coin-op stuff coming out shortly, but it's true that in the 16-bit market it's not the highest profile area. Coin-ops still do well, but it's with adventures games, role playing and simulations that you really reach a lot of people.

If what you're saying though is that we've had a lot more original product lately than we used to, then yes, that's true. We support a number of games that we have faith in as products even if they're not guaranteed to

M AND... LEVEL 42?: GEOFF BROWN SPEAKS

always sell that well – things like *E-Motion* for instance. Having said that though. *E-Motion* has gone down pretty well in America. I keep thinking of things in terms of the music industry, but this is like that in that the best records aren't always the ones that get to Number One in the charts, and similarly the best games don't always do all that well.

Can you tell when a product is going to be a hit and when it's going to fail?

Not always, no. It's very hard to judge – some real outsiders, which we didn't expect to do anything at all, have proved to be great successes, while other 'sure-fire hits' have been anything but. The *Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade* adventure game is one that springs to mind – I expected the arcade game to do lots better, but it didn't work out like that at all.

How much do you have to do with the development of the Lucasfilm and Delphine games you market?

We don't have all that much to do with the actual creative process to be honest. Our great strength has always been in the marketing of games, so we tend to have some input at the beginning on what sort of game is going to work in those terms, but little beyond that. We've never had in-house programmers traditionally, anyway – people like Tiertex, Probe and so on do all our coin-op style development, and we're such an important client for people like that it's almost the same as having them in-house most of the time.

The sort of large scale, very professional and innovative adventure games people like Lucasfilm do have been very important to you recently. Why do you think nobody's doing that sort of thing in this country?

Well, you've got to remember that both Lucasfilm and Delphine are off-shoots of very successful companies (Delphine is a French record label, while we've all seen a Lucasfilm movie) and they've got the money to finance the development of such big games. When a project's going to take a year or more, it takes a lot of money up front to keep it going.

I should know – we've got a project currently called *Dragon's Realm* scheduled for 1992 which has cost a good deal to finance. It's a vaguely *Eye Of The Beholder*-ish role playing game being developed by some of the guys who did *Corporation*, using what promises to be a revolutionary new system. Hopefully it's going to knock everybody's socks off when it comes out, but it's an awfully long way down the line, and who can predict what'll happen in the meantime? Somebody else could come up with an even better way of doing things, which'd prove rather annoying to say the least! It's as if you were producing an album now that won't be on sale for two years – who knows what sort of musical styles are going to be popular then? You need one hell of a crystal ball.

The other thing to remember is that good products can't always do it on their own – they need to be marketed right. Only when US Gold got behind *Operation Stealth* and *Future Wars* did they really do anything at all. That's our strength really, the marketing. Because we concentrate on that it means we can get involved with an awful lot of really good product from all over the world.

When using outside developers – and I'm thinking about the original product here, not the coin-op licences – do you come up with the idea for a game and approach the development team with it, or do you decide you want to work with a particular team and then see what they want to do?

Usually neither. It's true that with some projects – like, say, *Italy 1990* – we'll decide what we want to do and then go out looking for developers, but normally what happens is a team will come to us with an idea for a game they want to do. We have to decide if and when we want to do it, and take things from there.

What's the biggest problem with original product?

Slippage. I always say, 'water that's gone off the boil doesn't make good coffee' and a project that goes late just gets to be an annoyance to everybody eventually. Everyone gets fed up with it and you don't get the best out of it any more.

Of course, in any creative industry it's inevitable to some extent. *Italy 1990* went late, *E-Motion*'s another good example, there's another project underway at the moment that'll remain nameless but has been dogged with problems, from a programmer falling out with his girlfriend to the developers going into liquidation and so on. Everyone accuses software house of making vast profits on games, but if they saw our accounts they'd see it's not true at all. Sure, we'll make a lot of money on a hit game, but for every one of those there are plenty that won't do anything at all. I defy you to find a publisher who has had 10 hits out of 10 games – for whatever reasons, sometimes our fault and sometimes not, there are always going to be failures.

What games are you particularly proud of?

I don't know, that's really hard to say. I guess *Gauntlet* and *OutRun*, because they were such difficult coin-ops to convert, yet we pulled it off in both cases, and both were massive hits. I'm pleased we recognised the strength of *Beach Head* at the beginning too, and, ooh, lots more. There are so many products that have set standards over the years. Even things like, say, the recent *Gauntlet III* are pleasing. We could have just churned out another overhead-view *Gauntlet* game, but we didn't. Instead we went the isometric 3D route – a conscious effort to do something different to make the project really worthwhile.

Is there anybody out there you'd really like to be working with (but aren't)?

In this industry, nobody that springs to mind. Outside, erm, Mikhail Gorbachev. I don't know if he'd like to work with me though!

And finally, how do you see the future?

A-ha ! The big question! Well, to a large extend it's cartridge-based, though of course floppy disks won't disappear for quite a while yet, simply because you can't write to a cartridge. As far as US Gold's concerned, it's exciting having our original product selling and doing well in the States, but if I had to put my finger on one individual thing I'd say CD Rom technology. I think developments in CD in the near future will prove to be revolutionary – in the long term it will prove to be the ultimate media.

Destroy all monsters, then walk to the steps to gain access to a telescope.

using icons. Text plays a very minor role in *Shadow Sorcerer*, giving the player true arcade freedom in an adventure-based environment.

"Whereas something like *Eye Of The Beholder* relies heavily on the combat rules of Dungeons & Dragons, *Shadow Sorcerer* is rooted very much in tabletop D&D, where things are played out on a hex map with little painted miniatures.

"It's based on the DragonLance saga, so once again the setting is the land of Krynn. Choosing from four of thirteen Krynn characters, the objective is to lead a band of refugees to safety, though of course it's not quite as simple as that. And with a title like *Shadow Sorcerer*, it's obvious who you're going to come across at some point."

Expect a release early November.

All commands are accessed via pull-down menus and these icons panels.

Might and Magic III

It's sequel-mania in the world of role-playing. Prior to US Gold blessing us with the new *Eye Of The Beholder* epic (entitled *The Legend Of Darkmoon*), this lush-looking fantasy bash will be gracing our screens. Once again, there isn't anything to show as yet on the Amiga version.

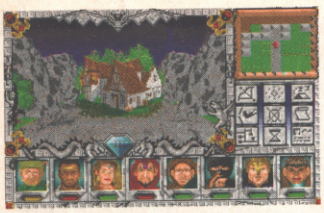
Bob Malin explains: "The main code is almost entirely portable, so there's no problem there. The only real task is to re-create the graphics. The PC version uses 256 colours, so it's quite a task to transfer things to the Amiga, working only with a 32 colour palette."

Visually, things aren't too dissimilar to *Eye Of The Beholder*.

"Well, the programmers of *Might And Magic III* used *Eye Of The Beholder* as a yardstick, and I think the results are even better than *Beholder*."

And what about the release of →

Startling graphics take *Might & Magic III* into a league of its own.



M&M III isn't limited to underground action, there's a whole world in there.

Beholder 2? Won't that clash?

"I don't think so. *Eye Of The Beholder 2* is going to be more puzzle-based anyway, rather than the free-movement hack-and-slash nature of the first. Character interaction will also play an important part in things, so essentially it's going to be what *Dungeon Master* should have been. *Might And Magic III* on the other hand, is more a collection of sub-

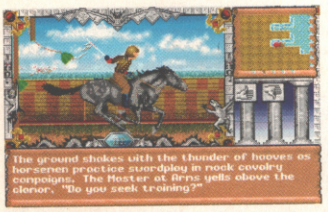
Although not fully graphically interactive, the nasties are still pretty formidable.

quests. Plus of course, the graphics are going to be quite astounding. New World are very much into big, bold games, so I think it will feel quite different to *Beholder*."

Certainly if *Might And Magic III* lives up to first impressions, then it could make *Eye Of The Beholder* look very dated indeed. A Christmas released is expected. That's not it though as far as role players are concerned – keep an eye out also for *Pools Of Darkness*, *Gateway To The*

The main game screen of *M&M III* isn't too far removed from *Beholder*.

Savage Frontier (both due in October), and a rather exciting one by the name of *Citadel Of The Black Sun*. Utilising a scrolling 3D isometric display, the German programmers have been working on it for last three and a half years! Expect a release early next year.



Animated interludes spice up *Might & Magic III* even further. Although the PC screens shown here use 256 colours, the Amiga graphics should be just as effective and atmospheric.

SUE LUCIANO:
PR Manager for CapCom and Lucasfilm

Bonanza Bros

Regarding by some as one of the few arcade games of recent times to possess any real 'style', the *Bros* of the title are a pair of small-time crooks, now reformed. They're up to their old tricks again, but this time they are actually being paid to make their robberies in order to test out security systems. Video cameras, trip systems, and other villains – all must be avoided in an effort to collect valuables. A strange game idea if ever there was one, *Bonanza Bros* is a breath of fresh air in both ideas and execution. Take a look at the screen shots, and you'll see *Bonanza Bros* has a real flair, the graphics giving it a very individual identity.

Sue Luciano: "The program is still in the early stages, but hopes are high. The programmers are committed to getting the code in on time, so a release is currently penned in for November. The Sega Megadrive and the arcade versions contained twelve levels, all of which will be implemented on the Amiga, but we are also hoping to include four extra levels, to be designed by ourselves."

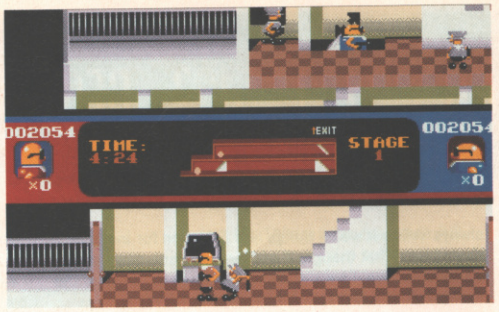
Certainly, what's ready so far bodes well for an impressive reproduction of the coin-op.

"Yes, though there are one or two things which we are still tweaking, such as making the colour scheme as close to the arcade machine as possible. We expect the Amiga version to be on par with the Megadrive and arcade versions, and hopefully even better!"

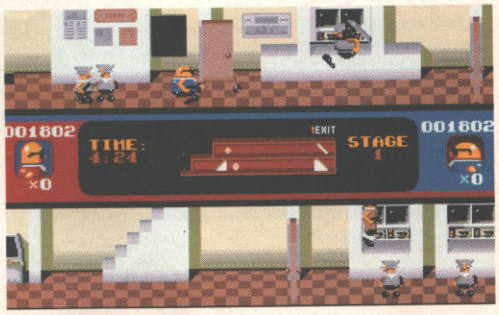
Bonanza Bros is shaping up quite nicely, the conversion work being handled by Twilight (the team also responsible for *Mega Twins* and Gremlin's forthcoming *Video Kid*). Visually the Amiga version is almost indistinguishable from its coin-op counterpart, so if the gameplay is produced to a similarly high quality, *Bonanza Bros* could well be a contender for the coveted number one spot this Christmas.

Alien Storm

It may involve hordes of grotesque slime creatures from space, but *Alien Storm* actually bears quite a few similarities to US Golds' other newie *Final Fight*. It's another arcade machine, which despite a lack of any really outstanding features, has proved a consistent hit with the arcade crowds – it's mixture of ultra-violence and large, gory graphics appealing to the muscle brigade. The Amiga version is in the hands of conversion veterans Tiertex, so it's no surprise that *Alien Storm* the computer game looks pretty much identical to the arcade game. The ultra-fast scrolling sequences, the vomit-inducing nasties and the firepower overkill – all have been implemented perfectly. Two other neat touches which have been included are the smart bomb – which sends a huge space-shape on a strafing run right across the play area – and the *Operation Wolf*-style sequences which provide an interesting change.



The Amiga implementation of *Bonanza Bros* is almost impossible to tell apart from its arcade counterpart. Let's hope the gameplay is similarly impressive.



Mobo and Robo, that terrible team of criminals attempt to outwit the building security, and pick up some loot while they're at it.

Sue: "What you see here is about 70 percent complete. This is the first test version from the programmers, so there's still quite a bit to be sorted. At the moment it's far to easy, for instance. Once again we're aiming for a full implementation."

Alien Storm is due in October.

***Alien Storm*'s two player mayhem. The game is 70 percent complete at the moment, but things already look remarkably close to the coin-op original.**

Indiana Jones

If you're wondering why you haven't heard anything about a new *Indiana Jones* film, there's a very good reason – there isn't going to be one. The story *Indiana Jones And The Fate Of Atlantis* is actually a comic published by Dark Horse in the USA, with a script by Mr Steven Spielberg himself. US Gold intend to release two games based upon the licence. The first to appear was to →

Grossed-out nasties are perhaps the most outstanding feature of *Alien Storm*, with all manner of blubbering creatures just asking to be fried.

RUGBY

The World Cup

Every four years the the World's major Rugby playing nations battle it out over a four week period to see which team will lift Rugby's Greatest Trophy.

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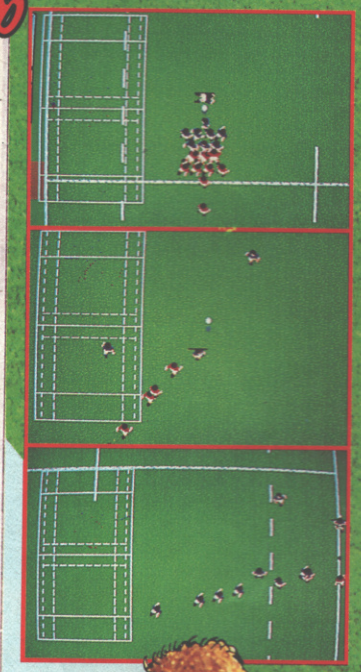

AMIGA SCREENSHOTS

DOMARK

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Programmed by WALKING CIRCLES

***Indiana Jones – The Adventure Game* (PC version shown) takes Lucasfilm's acclaimed parser system (first used in *Monkey Island*) and adds new features, such as icons to represent objects. The graphics too have been improved even further, with a real Indy comic-style look to things.**

The *OutRun* concept expanded even further to include a variety of European cities and landscapes.
From London ...
...its onto the road to Dover ...
...then to France on a jet-ski
***OutRun Europa* is huge, and blindingly fast.**

have been the British-produced action game. Programmed by Attention To Detail, *Indiana Jones – The Action Game* is a scrolling isometric 3D affair. Originally due for release in November, it's now unlikely to make an appearance until April '92.

Sue explains, "We've decided to push the action game back, because we don't want it to get lost among all the other pre-Christmas releases, and also because we really want to make sure that the program is as perfect as possible. Rather than rush release, we want to spend time making it even more playable, to get it just right."

The new story begins with Indy (plus new female sidekick) in a casino. From here, Indy must make his way to a naval base, steal a submarine, then locate the lost city of Atlantis. Rather than stick to the exact comic-book storyline, both *The Action Game* and *The Adventure* both promise to explore a few new avenues. *Monkey Island* creators Lucasfilm are handling *Indiana Jones – The Adventure*, but this is unlikely to see the light of day until April '92. Using the a slightly improved version of the parser system last seen in the aforementioned *Monkey Island*, the PC version of the game looks particularly impressive. It won't be any surprise if this game goes straight to number one next year.

Outrun Europa

This is a bit of strange one. Although loosely based upon Sega's *OutRun* arcade machine, *OutRun Europa* doesn't actually exist as an arcade game. Taking the turbo-nutter 3D concept of *OutRun* one stage further, *OutRun Europa* is actually a multi-vehicle ride across Europe. It takes in, amongst other things, a motorcycle trek from London to Dover, jet-skiing across the Channel section, then more exotic locations such as Spain and Berlin.

"Working with Lucasfilm's impressive adventures and Sega's fun shoot-'em-ups is a great contrast"

Sue Luciano is particularly fired up about this release. "The new version we've just got in is even better! It really is excellent. Generally everything is more polished. Vehicle lights work in tunnels, the sequence driving near the cliffs of Dover has been made more realistic, and the jet-ski sequence has been much improved, with a better range of obstacles to hinder your progress."

The most striking thing about *OutRun Europa* has to be the speed – it even outdoes the arcade machine in the hell-for-leather stakes. Probe are once again handling *OutRun* duties, but it looks as though they will more than make up for the two previous *OutRun* games. It will be interesting to see how it compares with Gremlin's *Lotus Turbo Challenge II*, but US Gold are confident that the more colourful graphics and the breathtaking speed will give it the advantage.

Expect a full AMIGA POWER review next month.

ALEXA CZECHOWSKI
PR Manager for Delphine and Sega

The Godfather

Programmers Creative Materials have decided to cram five (although it might eventually be six) different games into this colourful action affair, all of which have been lifted from famous sequences from

Animated anarchy on the Amiga.

the three violence-strewn movies.

The first is almost complete, although gameplay is still a little iffy at present. It's set in the streets of grimy New York circa 1947, and it has to be said that the graphics are gorgeously atmospheric. They've even given it that sepia look which helped make the first Godfather flick such a sensation.

Gameplay wise it's all very simple – mostly just sideways scrolling shooting and beating while remembering to avoid taking out any innocents. There are two sub-games in this level, both of which are first person perspective gallery type shoot-'em-ups. The best is set in the barber shop, where you're faced with the backs of huge leather chairs each one inhabited by a mobster. You'll see a foot reach down to swivel the chair round, so it's important to be quick before the villain gives you a taste of his Tommy gun...

The other, a bar-room sequence, seems to capture the feel of the movies well, with lots of ugly men reaching for guns before being blown away by your good self (splashes of blood are obligatory here). As we mentioned, the graphics are

The graphics really capture the feel of the first Godfather film.

Back in the mafia high life.

superb, and there's that real feeling of steamy, squalid New York City life. Parallax scrolling and attention to detail is as good as anything we've seen before, with outrageously realistic little touches like exactly correct street signs, and subway trains that pass through the game from time to time.

Alexa Czechowski explains: "We sent Pete Lyons, the graphic artist, over to the States to get some background, and it was well worth the trip. I think it's all the little touches and details that make this so atmospheric. We have to get this just right, because the licensor, Paramount, insist on seeing the game at every stage of development. They're very happy with what we've got achieved so far, but it's far from ready.

"For instance, the main character wears a raincoat at the moment, but in the final version he'll wear a traditional mob-suit. In the Miami sequence he's currently wearing the coat, which is obviously wrong for a place like Florida."

The only danger with *The Godfather* is that this loving attempt to re-create 'interactive' movies will harm gameplay. At the moment it's extremely simplistic stuff, and it's clear that the effort has been ploughed into the look and feel of the game rather than its playability. That said though, US Gold promise they are going hell for leather to get this just right, and one can't help feeling that the incredible atmosphere will cover up any minor gameplay shortcomings anyway.

Other levels will include a technicoloured sequence in Las Vegas, one in a Havana shanty town, that nautical romp around Miami's waterfront, and a blast-'em-up in Atlantic City (taken from one of the slaughter scenes in The Godfather III).

The Godfather is scheduled for release in late November, and buyers will be treated to a mini photo album packed with shots from the movies.

Mega Twins

What with two boyish heroes skipping around platforms in full pursuit of bouncing baddies you'd have thought that this would fall into the ever increasing cutesy category. Well, yes and no. It does have a distinct child-like feel to it, but, according to Alexa, *Mega Twins* is "mischievous rather than cute". Programmed by Twilight, and taken from the CapCom coin-op, it features three levels – the first in a forest, the second underwater, and the third in the air (the heroes get wings). Not too original sounding, perhaps, but new is the fact that each level has a mini-game tacked on for good measure.

"We know that people like fun and arcadey games"

There's definitely a high humour count, and the varied assembly of enemies are really very funny little things. The coin-op and game are best tackled with two players controlling the naughty sword wielding teenage heroes.

As a coin-op it was a minor hit, but on the Amiga, we reckon the *Rainbow Islands* brigade will find this most attractive. Conversion wise it's nigh on perfect with loads of bright, primary colours. There's plenty to do as well, lots of things to collect, and a smart bomb option for those tricky moments. "We know that people like fun and arcadey games," says Alexa, "so it's important for us to keep them coming." *Mega Twins* is almost complete, and should be out in November.

Another World

Delphine's Eric Chahi, has been working on this for two years (his last project was the hugely successful, but very different, *Future Wars*) so we're expecting something quite special.

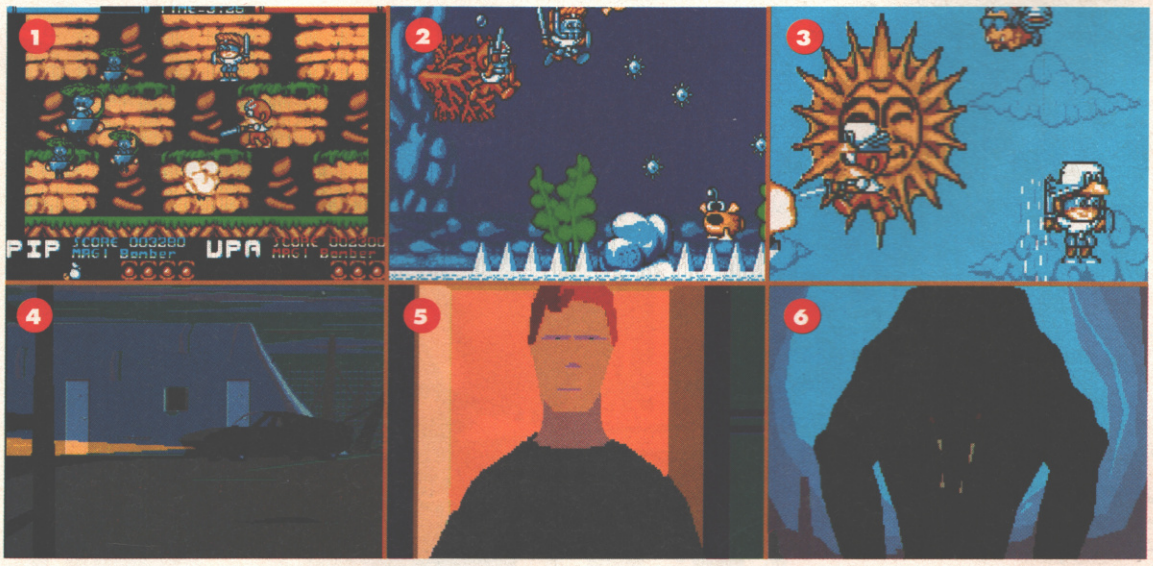
Another World is best described as a cross between their *Cruise For A Corpse* adventure and Broderbund's *Prince Of Persia*, with large, beautiful graphics mixed with some stunning animation techniques.

There's also a (very French) plot which features our hero (a scientist) attempting to split the atom. It has to be said that this proves to be a rather crap idea, because the experiment goes squiffy, and our scientist chum ends up being transported to a horrible planet seething with nothing but genocidal aliens and monsters. All this is explained in a lush intro sequence with more of those movie-like close-up shots and unusual angles which are becoming ever-more popular (see *Cruise For A Corpse* review this issue).

A tentacle reaches out of a chasm, a lone man is lost – it's *Another World*.

The game itself is full of running, jumping and fighting, and this is where that *Prince of Persia* comparison comes into play. The body animations are very much like those which set *Prince* apart from all other arcade adventures, but according to Alexa, this is just coincidence. "Everybody makes the *Prince Of Persia* comparison, but I think it's really just a natural development. Don't forget that Eric has been working on this for two years now, starting long before *Prince Of Persia* was released." This is surprising considering the look of the sprites.

We didn't see much of the game, but what was on offer was maddeningly impressive. The monsters are a cool bunch, and it's obviously taken a hell of an imagination (and not a little artistic talent) to bring these to life. Don't hold your breath for this one though – it's unlikely to make an appearance until well into '92.



1. Two player cute violence in the 'mischievous' *Mega Twins* – a game well suited to the *Rainbow Islands* brigade.
2. Level two of *Mega Twins* sees the dynamic duo clowning around underwater, complete with air bubbles and nautical nasties.
3. Onto level three, and the twins take to the air in hats with built-in birds. Somebody at CapCom is seriously weird.
4. Delphine's *Another World* has one of the most elaborate and impressive intro sequences ever. The car here has just skidded to a halt.
5. This is the the hero of *Another World*, prior to his lab accident. Not unlike *Cruise For A Corpse*, he actually walks right into the screen.
6. Even into the game proper, and *Another World* uses film-like animated sequences to depict crucial sections of the game.

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IF I'D KNOWN THEN...

SIMON PHIPPS has four firm Amiga favourites under his belt and yet only now is he working on what he considers to be his first 'real' 16-bit project, *Wolfchild* for Core Design. But if he'd known then what he knows now, how would his old games have been done differently?

I taught myself how to program on the BBC back in 1982. I went on to Polytechnic to do an HND in computer studies and worked for IBM during my 'sandwich' year, which was quite enjoyable. After that I went out into the big wide world of professional computing, which lasted about four months. It was incredibly boring – I was writing in BCPL ('Bloody Crap Programming Language') working on a document processing system for typesetting purposes. Terry Lloyd, who I'd known for ages – he did the graphics for *Impossamole* and so on – was working for Gremlin at the time and he gave me a call to see if I'd be interested in doing some freelance graphics. So I ended up doing the graphics for *Masters Of The Universe* on the ST. I then did the graphics for *Skate Crazy* on the Commodore 64, with Terry, and then the graphics for *Night Raider* on Spectrum.

Core started as development house in – oh – August 1988. We needed some projects to get us off the ground, so basically me and Terry sat around in a dark room and came up with *Rick Dangerous*...

THUNDERHAWK

When Mac (*Thunderhawk*'s programmer) turned up here he'd got this 3D system and he said he'd like to write a helicopter game. He had lots of ideas for the technical side, so I was involved with putting everything else on top – the gameplay really. It was originally a very simple shoot-'em-up in 3D, but then we decided to make it more complex. We'd designed it such that you would have six campaigns and 10 missions. What you'd do instead of flying all 10 missions was select which one to play and the order they were played would influence the campaign. It would have taken too long to design the campaigns though, and anyway, it would have put people without any wargaming experience off. I would have preferred a plain shoot 'em up, but I'm pleased how it came out – we hit that elusive halfway point. My major contribution is all the text – it all came from these fingertips. The volume of work there was incredible – how many different ways can you say 'You screwed up'? I do enjoy a damn good simulator – stuff like *Gunship* – or a damn good adventure like *Mercenary*. We've only just moved into 3D and I don't know much about it. The problem with 3D games is there's little or no character interaction. I've had a few ideas, but too much to code. We'll see...

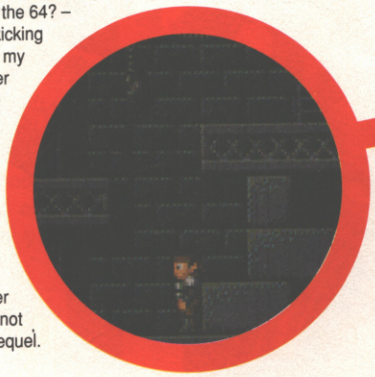
RETRO

I basically did just the graphics. There wasn't an artist to do it, and the design was already done. I did the best job I could do, and I'm pleased with the results graphically... I'm not really interested in future sports though.

SWITCHBLADE

I started this in my spare time when I was doing *Rick*. To look back at it now, it's a coding nightmare. With *Rick*, I was working with a team of four other guys so we'd talk things out and decide the best way to do stuff. With *Switchblade* the code's like spaghetti – but it worked.

Switchblade is a different style of game to *Rick*. It was something I wanted to do – remember (Datasoft's) *Bruce Lee* on the 64? – with quite a big map, plenty of running around, kicking everyone in. It's platformy beat-'em-up. I let my imagination run riot. My only regret is that Core never released it themselves. Yes, the jumping is a little awkward – that was my lack of experience, but I put it right in *Rick*. The title sequence was something I wanted to do – it was something a bit different. There are a lot of games out there which look different but you can't play them. Would I have liked to do the sequel? I'd thought about it. I'd have certainly made Hiro bigger and had more sprites on screen and more animation. And some parallax. Basically I'd have made it a bigger version, with more *Rick*-style traps and stuff. No, I'm not all that keen on the sequel.

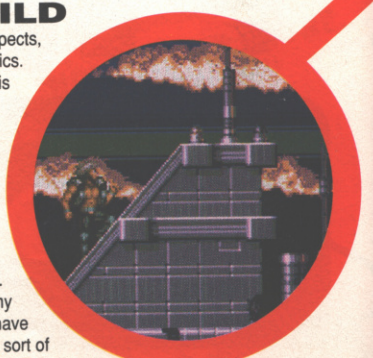


WOLFCHILD

This comes from an idea I had last year. Basically, it was to do a really big beat-'em-up type platform game and revisit, in some respects, old territory but with plenty of new stuff. Something like *Strider* and *Rick* – all the best bits but with a totally different style of graphics. The storyline's in a Japanesey Akira sort of mould. You're this six-foot-six brick outhouse with long blonde hair and your dad's this sort of genetic scientist who's been kidnapped by an evil organisation that wants to rule the world. Your dad's been working on perfecting the mutation and alteration of super-human animals to produce the ultimate warriors – that's why you have the ability to turn into dirty great werewolf that fires laser beams and stuff. Basically what you've got to do is kick bottom and escape with your dad.

There are five levels which are each themed towards a different kind of animal, and all the guys you're fighting against are half-human mutations as well. It's a sort of futuristic Island Of Doctor Moreau. John Kirkland's coding *Wolfchild* – he did *Warzone*. I'm helping out with the coding and doing all the graphics. This is actually my first truly 16-bit game because we're not having to consider 8-bit conversions. It's a chance to really let loose now we know an awful lot more about 16-bit. We're majoring on Amiga, with parallax scrolling and special effects galore and so on.

From a graphics point of view I want to put a really well-animated character into a game – there's not a lot of animation in my other stuff so I'm learning how to animate properly. One of the things I've done with this is to have lots of set pieces. Rather than have lot of repetitive aliens, the map's built up so specific things happen in certain places. There are sloped floors and curves and all that sort of thing. It's a real challenge creating and cramming in this fully animated character. He's made up from 176 separate frames – facing one way. We've managed to fit him in to 80.5K, so there's enough room for the bad guys.



RICK DANGEROUS

We wanted to try and do the kind of game you used to get on the 64. I never actually owned one, but I played stuff like Electronic Arts' *Spelunker* and Activision's *HERO* and *Pitfall* round at Terry's house. At the time it seemed like no-one had considered doing this sort of thing on the home computers for a long while. There was a big glut of sports and driving simulations, but we hadn't seen anything like this for years and years so we wrote down absolutely every kind of category we could do – fantasy, Indiana Jones and so on. Right next to that we wrote down all the existing games that fitted into those categories, and it turned out that no-one had done a decent Indiana Jones game. None of them had captured the spirit of it – the sneaking into a temple and the traps and so on – so we designed the game like that. The visual influence came from the Mordillo stuff – do you remember those posters?

We had lots of wild ideas and threw them down and because I had some knowledge of programming – once I'd started at Gremlin I taught myself how to code 68000 – it helped the design. That's something I try to do with anything I design: I wouldn't do anything I couldn't program myself. As *Rick* progressed things got trimmed and toned to fit into Spectrums and so on – it had to be convertable so it wasn't state of the art on the Amiga, but it was still very playable. One of the ideas we dropped was the ability to pole vault – that's where the stick came from. Basically it was too complex to program and we couldn't fit it into the control system. Otherwise we didn't have many problems.

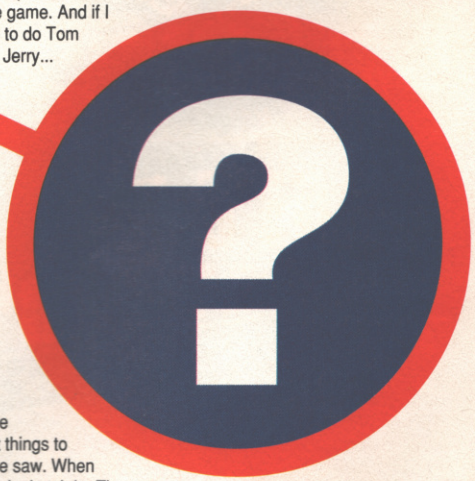
There's one thing we put in though which is a real killer – and I should have been more forceful about it being toned down. There's a bit towards the end of the second level where you have to jump over a blowpipe and avoid some spikes. We made it easy but Firebird asked us to make it harder, so we went through the whole game and toughened things up. Some people in the office could do it and some couldn't but because it could be done we left it in. *Rick* was done across six formats in no more than about five months.

RICK DANGEROUS II

We were scheduled to do this in about six months, but *Python* running late meant that we had less time. We still managed to turn it around on time. We learned a lot from *Rick I* – making it easier on the first level and so on. *Rick II* was great fun to put together, and it went so smoothly – especially after *Python*. Terry did the backgrounds, and I did the sprites and the coding on the ST and Amiga. We wondered whether everyone would compare it to the first one. We managed to put in all the things that we wanted to put into the original game, and on a coding level it's totally different. The only thing I'd do now is make it easier for me because I can't play beyond level three. It was nice to work on a game where I didn't know what to expect – I only knew the mechanics and not implementation. Actually, I wish I'd known at the time how to get it working on the Amiga 3000.

THE FUTURE

Have I had any thoughts beyond *Wolfchild*? Not really. I want to get into console stuff ultimately. I'm happy to do coding and graphics and design – it helps to keep a continuous look throughout the game. And if I ever get the chance to do Tom And Jerry...



MONTY PYTHON

Before we got *Python* we went for two options: *Judge Dredd* and *Python*. We ended up with *Python* (The Sales Curve got *Dredd*). I'd like to have done *Dredd*. I'd have done something pretty meaty, along the lines of the first Ocean *RoboCop* thing but with more detection. I've always wanted to do a future-cop type game...

With *Python*, Virgin were concerned that we didn't do another *Rick Dangerous*, so that influenced me to go for something off the wall, which is what the whole Python thing forces you into anyway. We spent a lot of time trying to get the game right. The problem with Python is that it means different things to everybody. What we saw as Python wasn't what everyone else saw. When we took it for approval people would ask if we had such and such sketch in. There was just so much potential for what the game could be – you could just keep going and going. The original design was to have something a lot more based on mastering control of something – something like *Rick* has very immediate control. And again, the design had to work over six formats. We started with Gumby in his four forms. In the section underwater, say, where Gumby's the fish, the main thing was to get to grips with the control and the timing, but as it evolved the control got snappier and tighter because everyone preferred it. I do regret getting the control wrong at first. It certainly taught me a lot about using inertia.

The one thing I would do now is make it run smoother. At the time of *Python* we actually had no-one with enough experience on the Amiga for much more than an ST port-over. Still, it's not a bad game because of it – for what it set out to be. It's always a problem with licences as you're bolted down to the subject. With *Python* we had a loose brief, and that helped but also hindered. I'd be a lot more cautious of touching another licence. Sometimes licences don't capture the feel of the original. Imagine trying to bring a comedy show on BBC2 to the home computer. Yes, I'd like to see somebody try to do something better. I'm very pleased with how the graphics turned out. It was a challenge to get them to look as much like Terry Gilliam's as possible. It was difficult afterwards trying to get out of that style. Basically, it was something I enjoyed seeing out and finished, but actually doing it was murder.

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Just why are French games so weird?

Come on, you know what we mean. When was the last time you loaded up a French game and didn't have to look twice to check you hadn't accidentally been warped into the sixth dimension? Gallic eccentricity, or just the fact that French programmers are all completely bonkers? Jonathan Davies was told to find out.

France is famous for a lot of things: wine, cheese, berets, stripy t-shirts, Citröens, Plastic Bertrand, boules... and weird computer games. In fact, the words 'French' and 'weird' go hand in hand when it comes to gaming. You simply won't see one without the other. It's not just in the surface details that they're weird, either. Even after you've stripped away all the psychedelic colour schemes, wacky plots and naked ladies which adorn most French games and could (just about) be dismissed as the products of over-fertile imaginations, they still seem to be permeated by a deep-down weirdness that defies accurate description.

But we've all played plenty of French games, so you know what I'm on about. What we don't know is *why* they're so strange. The world of software seemed such a sane and predictable place before the French arrived on the scene...

So just who is responsible?

There are four big names when it comes to French software houses (plus a number of smaller ones we only see something of every so often).

Infogrames have been around for donkeys years, and have struck it big on a number of occasions with their high-profile strategy games (*Sim City*, *North And South*), the odd puzzler (*Tetris* et al) and a select few 'ordinary' arcade things (like *Metal Masters*). Their logo is an armadillo.

Ubi Soft, on the other hand, tend to take care of the action side of things. While you'd be hard-pressed to come up with the names of more than one or two of their games (remember *Jupiter's Masterdrive*, *Ranx* or *Brain Blasters*, anybody?), they've come up with a number to be grateful for too (*Pro Tennis Tour 2*, for example).

Titus go back a long way (right back to *Crazy Cars*, in fact), and also mainly stick to what they're best at – arcade

games. Some of them have been pretty ropey (erm, *Knight Force*?) but there's plenty of wheat amongst the chaff (you can't go that far wrong with *Prehistorik* or *Battlestorm* too, say).

Finally there's Loriciel, a multi-talented bunch whose varied output ranges from puzzle games to battleship simulators (check out *Quadrel*, *ADS*, *Super Skweek* and *Tennis Cup* amongst recent-ish releases) with nothing approaching a discernible theme running through them at all.

Finally, if you're going to be pedantic, you could also include the Paris-based Disc Company (the new Activision people) but since new Activision product (mainly developed in the UK) shows little to no immediate sign of becoming overtly 'French' we'll let them off for the time being. Both Virgin and Ocean have French arms to their companies too – the Virgin lot have never had a product released over here to the best of my knowledge (which makes me suspect them of at least a degree of weirdness) while Ocean France tend to come up with high profile arcade conversions, most recently the excellent *Toki*.

And then, beavering away behind the scenes, we mustn't forget the smaller French programming teams and publishers who write stuff and only occasionally get it published over here (often through UK software houses). Delphine is the only one I can think of at the moment (*Operation Stealth*, *Cruise for a Corpse*) but there are probably lots of others too. Like Linel for instance, which I've just remembered too.

There's one thing they've all got in common though – they're all completely loopy.

Getting to the heart of the matter

I decided to phone Dominique Cor at Infogrames.

Me: Hello. Why are French games weird? Yours in particular.

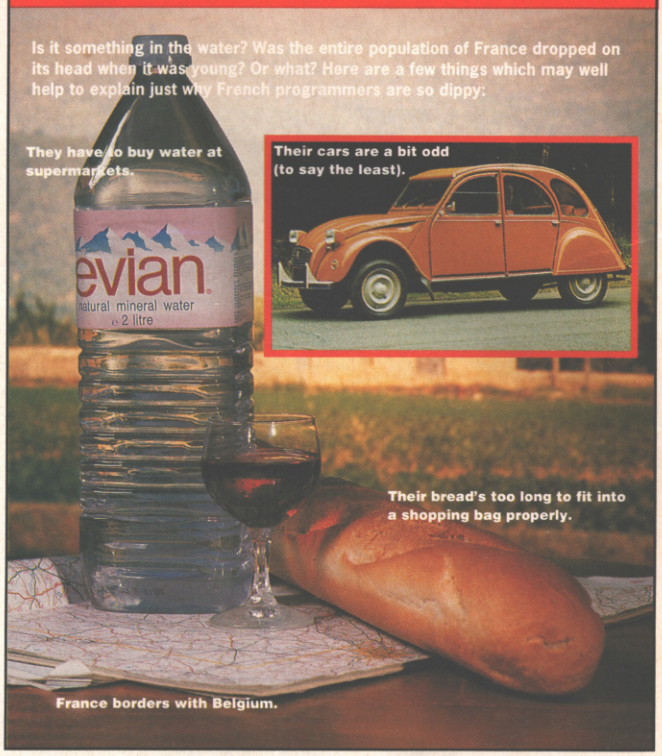
Dominique: Good question. You see, we're a French company, which means we're primarily writing games for French people, and the French market is a completely different kettle of fish to the British one. French kids simply aren't into the shoot-'em-ups that you British seem to find so fascinating, so we have to look elsewhere for inspiration. And that means trying out new styles of games which could, at first glance, be mistaken for being weird.

Me: Hmm. So does this policy seem to be working.

Dominique: Well, in France they go a bundle on it, and the Germans lap it up as well. (They're a bit weird too.) But admittedly we are having a few problems getting the message across in the UK, where some of our weirder games don't do as well as they otherwise might. We're making progress, though.

CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS

Is it something in the water? Was the entire population of France dropped on its head when it was young? Or what? Here are a few things which may well help to explain just why French programmers are so dippy:



SOME FAMOUS (AND SOME NOT-SO-FAMOUS) FRENCH GAMES

NORTH AND SOUTH

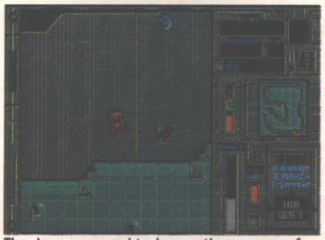
Publisher: Infogrames
Released: Late 1989

In theory: A wargame. Yikes. It's the Confederates versus the Yankees battling for control of the USA. You've got to move your armies around, keep them supplied and think up strategies. There are some arcade sequences too, where you've got to attack trains, take forts and fight battles.
But, erm...: The whole thing's so totally, utterly wacky it's untrue. It's based on a cartoon strip, and it shows. The graphics are absolutely hilarious – superbly drawn and animated. And the same goes for the sound (apart from the 'drawn and animated' bit), which is a continuous barrage of silly effects. It's one of the only genuinely amusing games ever – nothing like a wargame at all – and brilliant fun to play even if you haven't a clue what the hell is going on.
WEIRDNESS FACTOR: 100

JUPITER'S MASTERDRIVE

Publisher: Ubi Soft
Released: Early 1991

In theory: A *Supercars*-style driving game, where you look at the course from above through a scrolling window. You race against two other cars, which can be bumped into or shot at to give you the edge. Extra fuel, ammo and so on can be picked up along the way, as can credits which can be redeemed in a shop between levels. Smooth graphics and pretty good fun all round.
But, erm...: "*Jupiter's Masterdrive*"? And all the courses are rather odd-looking, too.

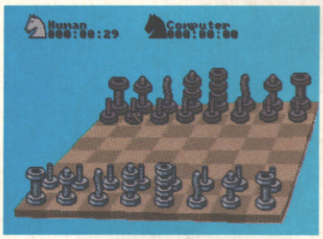


They're supposed to be on the moons of Jupiter, you see, but that (weird though it may be) is no excuse for their very peculiar design. And the green alien who runs the shop and drums his fingers if you spend too long there? Weird.
WEIRDNESS FACTOR: 100

CHESS SIMULATOR

Publisher: Infogrames
Released: Mid 1990

In theory: A simple, straightforward chess game with all the normal features you'd expect to find: 2D/3D views, various difficulty levels, help if you need it, learning, lots of technical things like openings libraries and ELO ratings... Surely not even



the French could come up with a weird chess game.
But, erm...: They have! (It was only to be expected, I suppose.) Who on earth did they sample the speech from? He sounds like the bad guy out of a James Bond film after a heavy night on the vodka. And the chess sets are very odd indeed. The African and Indian ones are quite weird enough, but the 'nuts and bolts' one really takes the biscuit.
WEIRDNESS FACTOR: 100

ALPHA WAVES

Publisher: Infogrames
Released: Mid 1991

In theory: There's nothing even vaguely sensible about it at all.
But, erm...: There's nothing even vaguely sensible about it at all. It's actually been designed from the outset to be weird, as if to say 'Well, if you thought all those were weird...' Even the instructions have trouble describing it, babbling on about New Age experiences and virtual reality. But what chance do they stand when the game's supposed to stimulate your brain with various combinations of colours which are meant to reflect your mood? At its heart is a series of 3D rooms filled with platforms which you have to bounce around, crystals to collect and baddies to avoid. Unless you want to play it in 'emotion mode', that is, where you can forget about the crystals and things and just bounce around. It's even more boring than it sounds.
WEIRDNESS FACTOR: 100

FRENCH INSTRUCTIONS – THEY'RE PRETTY WEIRD TOO

If you've ever read the manual to a French game you'll know what we mean. Even allowing for the eccentricities of your average French-to-English translator, they're very odd indeed...

'Millions of spectators come every year to plunge themselves into the vicious atmosphere of Jupiter and watch the numerous qualification trials organised in sight of the grand finale...'
– *Jupiter's Masterdrive*, Ubi Soft

'Always available and extremely performing, *Chess Simulator* is the ideal partner which promises to guide your talent on the path of the Grand Masters.'
– *Chess Simulator*, Infogrames

'You are an impossible young man, a true game cock.'
– *Disc*, Loriciel

'One unique feature of this game is the use of the corners of the well to create new shapes from the old shapes. When a piece is wrapped round a corner, its segments go in a direction appropriate for the wall that section is on, until one segment hits an obstructing piece. If obstructing pieces are very close to the corner, this can result in the parts of the piece overlapping each other, making a smaller piece out of the original piece.'
– *Welltris*, Infogrames

Me: Right. Erm, bye then.
Dominique: Bye.

I'm a bit crap at phoning people up (as you can probably tell). Fortunately I think Dominique probably speaks for the whole French software industry there, so I didn't feel I needed to call anyone else.

France certainly is a completely different market. If you've ever checked out a French shopping precinct you'll have noticed a complete lack of (or certainly less of) all the things British people generally regard as 'culture'. You'd have to search long and hard to find a *Turtles* poster to stick on your wall, for example.

Instead, French people spend their spare francs on what they call 'bande dessins' – cartoon strips. These come in big hardback books, a bit like Tin Tin ones, and feature comic characters like Gaston and Boule et Bill, and serious tough-guys like Buck Danny and Tanguy et Laverdure (who fly Mirages). They're brilliant, but in a very weird sort of way. (And of course they're all in French.)

The thing is, though, that French games and French comic books have a lot in common. The big, epic graphic adventure games such as *BAT* and Delphine's games are done in a similar style to the action cartoons, while the really outlandish arcade games, like *Super Skweek* and *Prehistorik*, bear an uncanny resemblance to the more comicy ones. And as the books have been around a lot longer than the games, I think its fair to say that the latter are heavily influenced by the former. Indeed, some games are directly based on comic books – just look at *North And South* or *Ranx* (but grab hold of a good, solid piece of furniture first).

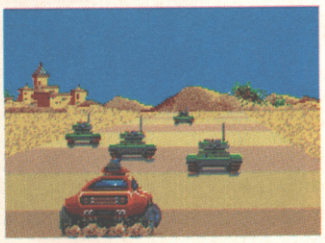
Hurrah! I think we might actually be getting somewhere.

While sifting through the large pile of

Okay, so French games are weird

French games from which I picked the ones featured in this article, I noticed something else. Apart from being weird, they're all, almost without exception, extremely good. It's true! Okay, so the French may have come up with the odd crap puzzle game, and when they try a bog-standard driving game or something

FIRE AND FORGET
Publisher: Titus
Released: Late 1988



In theory: An ordinary driving game. Well, quite ordinary anyway. You pick a warzone and then drive through it, shooting anything that gets in your way and watching out for tanks and helicopters. You may start running out of fuel, but as usual the enemy have had the foresight to leave handy fuel tanks lying around for you to pick up. It's pretty good fun and everything...
But, erm...: The game's littered with unnervingly bizarre sound effects, and the choice of colours is as odd as ever (mostly purple). And there's this strange two-player mode, where player two flies this sort of plane thing. It makes the helicopters less of a problem, but looks (as I said) strange. As if the one-player mode isn't weird enough as it is.
WEIRDNESS FACTOR: 100

SUPER SKWEEK
Publisher: Loriciel
Released: Mid 1991

In theory: A 'cute' game, where you're a fluffy yellow thing who jumps around changing the colours of tiles. There are traps to avoid, baddies to kill, bonuses to collect and all the other features normally found in this sort of thing.
But, erm...: The French obviously equate 'cute' with 'weird'. (And everything else with 'weird', for that matter.) So expect more 'Er..?' than 'Aahh...'. You're meant to be rescuing 'beautiful Skweekettes' for one thing. And, while the first few levels are reasonably sane, things quickly degenerate into a chaotic free-for-all, with monsters leaping at you from all sides, platforms crumbling away underneath you and fried eggs suddenly appearing out of nowhere . It's enjoyable, slightly repetitive and unquestionably French.
WEIRDNESS FACTOR: 100

DUCK TALES
Publisher: Disney Software/Titus
Released: Mid 1990

In theory: A prestigious cartoon tie-in, where you take control of Scrooge McDuck and chums in an attempt to collect collect as much money as possible and become Duck Of The Year, a title also sought by Flintheart Glomgold who's trying to beat you to it. This means picking destinations from a map of the world, flying to them (a simple sideways scroller) and then playing one of three or four mini-games at each one.
But, erm...: There are plenty of 'unusual' touches graphic-and sound-wise, but that's nothing. Weirdness or simply crapness, I'm not sure, but the unbearable amount of disk accessing that goes on in between – and even during – each section turns the whole thing into a bit of a disaster. They must be qua... (Snip! Ed)
WEIRDNESS FACTOR: 100

BAT
Publisher: Ubi Soft
Released: Late 1990

In theory: You're an agent who's been sent to Selenia to stop it from being blown up by a baddy called Vrangor. That means visiting various locations, each with its own picture from which you can select things to 'interact' with. You can talk to other characters, use machines and even have a crack at flying the Drag (a plane thing). To assist you you've got a computer stuck onto your arm, which can be programmed to do lots of useful things. A pretty ordinary graphics adventure, then, by the sound of it.
But, erm...: Not so. As well as the typically French graphics and undeniably weird atmosphere, the game also features such oddities as a 'love meter' (ahem). It's also extremely complicated, and masses of work obviously went into it.
WEIRDNESS FACTOR: 100

(presumably in an attempt to appease the British) it usually ends in disaster. But when they're in their element, French programmers are very good indeed. Let's face it: if I'd taken a similar random cross-section of British games, 90 percent of them would have been absolute tripe.

There just seems to be a lot more to a French game. I'm speaking very generally here, of course, but while the British seem content to chuck a few spaceships, sideways-scrolling terrain and platforms together and call them a game, the French go to a lot more trouble, adding long introductions, plenty of atmospheric graphics and sound and masses of detail which you slowly discover as you get into the game. The result is that you feel that your Amiga is being stretched rather than pampered, and – more importantly – that your money's been well spent. (American games tend to be similarly intricate, but they're all a bit, well, American.)

What's happening? I'm meant to be going on about French games being weird, and here I am saying just how good they all are.

French games are weird, that's for

So what have we discovered exactly?

sure. And the real reason is that it's just the way the French are – weird. Well, maybe not 'weird', exactly, just a bit, um, okay – weird.

So, that's that then. I'm going to have a nice, quiet lie down now, while you have a bit of a think about the future of British games in Europe. Are they going to have to become weird too, for example? Will we eventually have to wave goodbye to the bloke-walking-along-shooting-things game, the little-people-wandering-around-isometric-landscapes game, and all our other favourites?

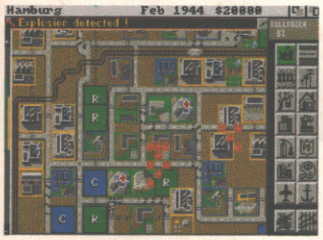
Or will we eventually manage to wear them down with an endless stream of nigh-on identical shooty-shooty games? I find myself having come along to gently mock the French way of doing things, and have ended up actually rather enamoured by their individuality. Oh dear. Things never seem to work out quite the way you thought they were going to, do they? Oh well, c'est la vie.

CONTENTS OF A TYPICAL FRENCH GAME

A 63ft-long leopard called Jean-Luc.
Several purple-skinned, bare-breasted women.
Sampled sound-effects of somebody pouring tomato ketchup down a disused mineshaft.
A road cone which sings the Marseillaise when you stand on the lip of it.

SIM CITY

Publisher: Infogrames
Released: Late 1989



In theory: The game that launched quite a lot of similar games. It's the original 'build a city' game where you've got to start off with a collection of mud huts and develop them into a throbbing metropolis, complete with industry, commerce, police and fire services and a transport network. Depending on your mood, you might want to treat your population to an airport, a stadium or a nuclear power station. Load it up and you probably won't even blink for a week.

But, erm...: The weirdest thing about it is, it's not actually weird in the slightest. From start to finish, absolutely nothing weird happens at all. Weird, eh? (Of course, the fact that Maxis, the American developers of the original PC version, aren't even slightly French might have something to do with it).

WEIRDNESS FACTOR: 0

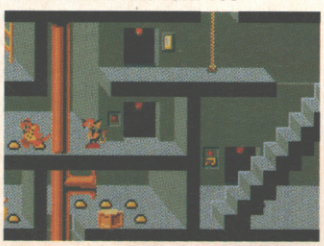
THE TOYOTTES

Publisher: Infogrames
Released: Mid 1990

In theory: You, Cyprian, have got to rescue the king's son who has disappeared while out playing with his ball.

But, erm...: You're a rat. And so's the king. And everyone else for that matter. Apart from all the baddies, that is, who come in all manner of weird, French shapes and sizes. It's another cartoon tie-in, you see, so the flood gates are opened for a deluge of gratuitous wackiness. Bump into a monster and you and it will disappear into a cloud of smoke, in which all you can do is press fire and hope for the best. Clamber into a pipe and you'll crawl along it, making a little bump in it and a scraping sound. The game's packed with brilliant animation and silly sound effects, making it ludicrously playable. For about ten minutes, anyway, after which it gets ludicrously boring.

WEIRDNESS FACTOR: 100



EN GARDE!

French developers, defend yourselves!

It's not really fair to say all this without allowing some of the French software house a right to reply though, is it? Being a bit too scared to ask them if they thought their games were weird or not, I instead put it to them that there might be a few subtle, um, 'differences' between Gallic software and the stuff you get in the rest of the world...

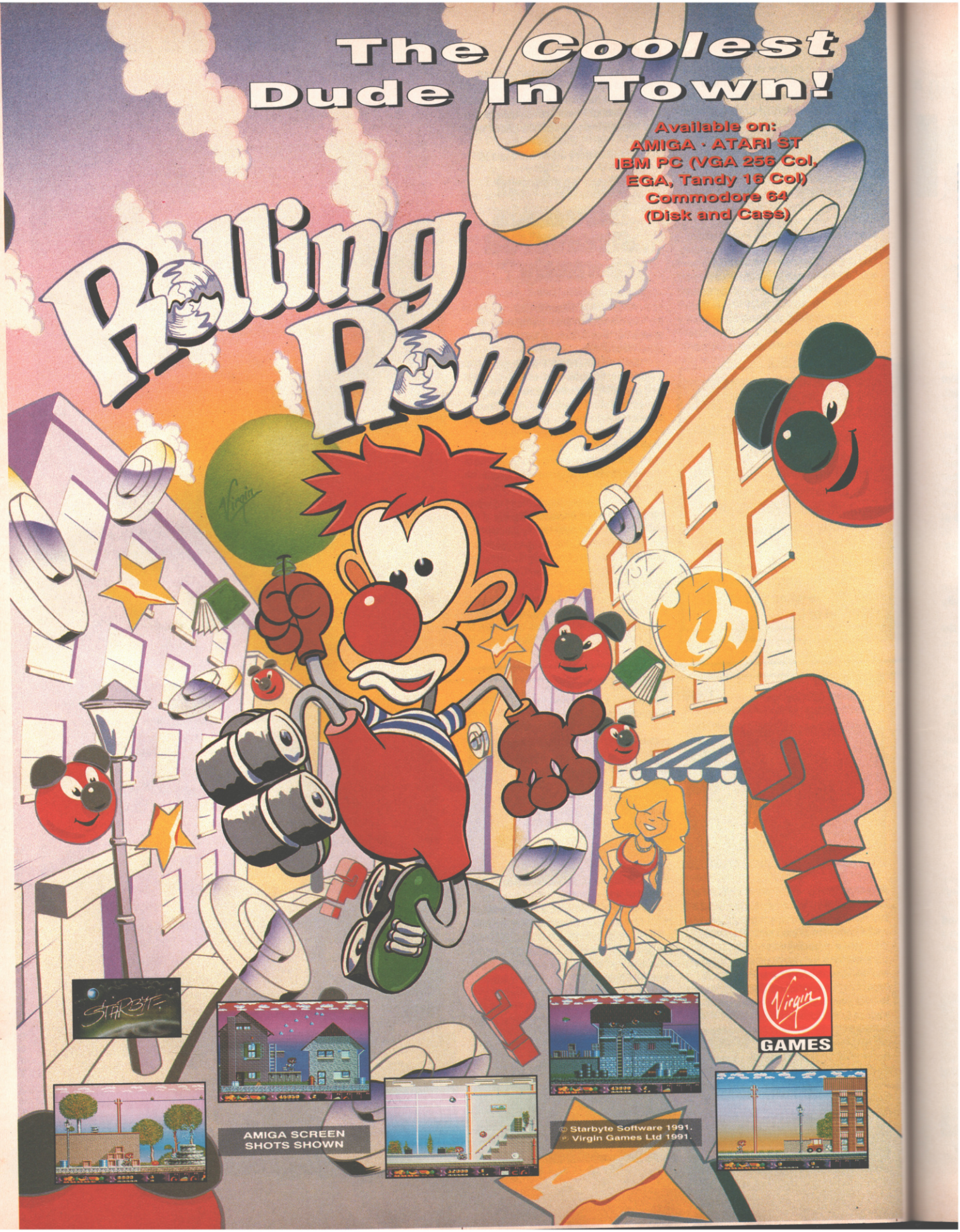
'I would say that we are making the best software in the world, and that's because we're French, ha ha!
What, you want the real answer? Okay, well, we tend to try and write a different sort of game from straight shoot-'em-ups, and while sometimes they work at other times they're not as successful as we'd like them to be. Games like *Alpha Waves* are very different from most things you get in the UK market – perhaps too different. English games players tend to like on the one hand simple games like shoot-'em-ups, and on the other hand quite heavy and involved strategy things. There isn't a lot in the middle area between these sorts of games though, and that's where we tend to fit.

'Also, in the UK game players tend to read lots of magazines and know exactly what they want – they'll go into a shop with one product in mind, buy it, and then head straight out again. They won't take a risk on the more unusual products, or things they've never heard of, which can get a bit frustrating for us.'
Dominique Corr
Infogrames

'Okay, so we've made our mistakes in the past, as everyone has, but now I think we're producing some very high quality products. We're currently running a series of conferences – mainly in France – where we invite people who've bought a Ubi Soft product before to come along, take a look at things were developing, and then make the modifications they suggest. Games that do well in the conferences tend to do well in the market place – *BAT*, for instance, was received very well and has been a bit hit for us, whereas one we had called *Joe The Monkey* which got a big thumbs down and hasn't been heard of since. I would agree that certain sorts of game do well in certain territories, but generally a good game is a good game is a good game. A high quality product will generally do well anywhere.'
Duncan Lowthian
Ubi Soft

'In the UK people tend to like shoot-'em-ups a lot, some adventure games, and in general games with a very high standard of graphics – what they don't seem to go for so much are puzzle games. I tend to get the impression there isn't enough action in them – they're too boring for you. Me, on the other hand, I like puzzle games – but then I'm a girl, so I would, wouldn't I?

'What? Have we got any good games coming up? Well, there's one called *Baby Joe* that a lot of people seem to really like. You control a really cute little baby – he's got to find his bottle and eat lots of food, but when he does he has to go wee wee, and then his nappy gets really full so he can't run any more. It's a hilarious game.'
Emmanuelle Kreuz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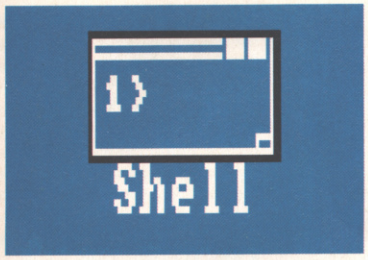

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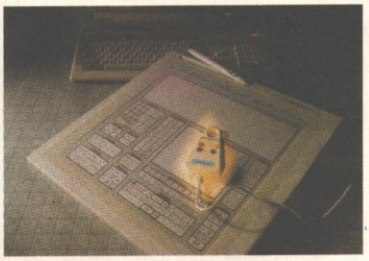

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GAMES REVIEWS CONTINUED

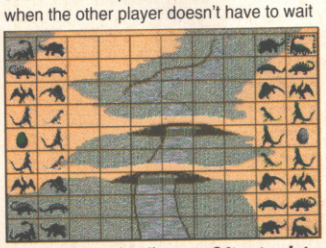
This month, budgies start on page 88, PD on page 93 and full price games below – not forgetting, of course, POWER's first ever hardware review, just across the way...

DINO WARS

Publisher: Magic Bytes
Price: £25.99
Authors: DigiTek Software
Release: Out now

Dino Wars is set (approximately) in the year 160 000 000 B.C, concerning itself with two particular groups of dinosaurs who happened to be around at the time, the plot enlightening its reader to the fact that each group has just kidnapped an important egg from the opposing side. As can be imagined, both parties are more than a little miffed and hence decide to get their own back on each other by, yep you guessed it, having a game of chess.

And here's where you, and possibly a friend, come in. The actual gameplay takes place chess-like on a chequered board, but with a number of notable differences from the traditional game. And here they are (in a long list). In preference to moving tacky wooden pieces around (where you have to use a piece of Lego because you've lost one of the Knights), little animated dinosaurs are played with instead, naturally with the obligatory restrictions on movement patterns. The game can be won in either of two ways – by killing off all the opponents (when two pieces meet, an arcade style beat-'em-up takes place putting you in the hot seat), or alternatively (and far more strategically) by recapturing your egg from the opposite side of the playing area. Additionally the game can be played in 'turns mode', where each player takes it in turns, or the somewhat less polite 'simultaneous mode' when the other player doesn't have to wait for you to move, and therefore the game is far more frantic. And finally it is possible to alter the board so that rivers, mountains, volcanoes, mud and so fourth appear on the playing area which only certain pieces can cross.



Playing chess with dinosaurs? It gets a lot stranger in *Dino Wars*.

Well, that's the facts down on paper, but how will you know if it's any good? Hmmm, a bit of a tricky one that. I know – you can ask me. Well, firstly a word about the beat-'em-up part. It's not very good, as lack of moves (each dinosaur has an unique three) means that little skill is needed at all. More moves would in all likelyhood have been too confusing perhaps, but just three make things far too boring – it's a bit of a no win situation I'm afraid. Nice graphics, though.

Basically, once you've played one game in each of the different modes available, glanced through the enlightening encyclopedia screens and fiddled around with the box for a while, you'll probably have discovered all the game has to offer, and will be severely disappointed. It's no fault of the programming, just the fault of the over-simplistic game design which fails to be simplistic AND addictive. Call it a cliche, but at budget, perhaps, it might be alright. At full price? Not on your nelly. •

RICH PELLEY

THE BOTTOM LINE

A board-type game, with dinosaurs, but with far too little substance to it. A few goes and you'll be bored.

45 PERCENT

GEISHA

Publisher: Tomahawk (Electronic Zoo)
Price: £25.99
Authors: Coktel Vision
Release: Out now

PHWOOAAAAAR! Where would we be without sex, eh? We wouldn't, it's as simple as that. After evolution, sex is the oldest trick in the book, so to speak, and yet certain sections of society still find the subject embarassing or distasteful or offensive even. So for their benefit: sex, sex, sex, sex, sex.

The French aren't so coy about sex, that's for sure. They love it. They seem to have so much sex it's coming out of their ears. And any left-over sex, it would seem, has been used to create 'top' home computer software such as *Emmanuelle* and now *Geisha*.

As far as the dictionary's concerned, sex doesn't actually come into the repetoire of a Geisha (she only sings and dances for entertainment apparently). But of course, we don't believe that for a minute – and why should we when this *Geisha*'s sold in a brown-paper-effect box with a bright red 'XXXX ADULTS ONLY XXXX' stamp on it? Hubba hubba.

The Top Quality plot behind *Geisha* concerns a young lady called Eve. She's been kidnapped by the Lustful Dragon and will die after "repeated orgasms" if he has

Here it is, an almost non-titillating screen from the quite atrocious *Geisha*.

his wicked way. He's more than welcome to her as far as I'm concerned. He didn't have to play this crap to get his claws into her in the first place.

Geisha turns out to be a dull, dreary, and very limited mouse-driven adventure with a user-interface so poor that it's more embarassing (or offensive even) than the subject matter. Apart from bucketloads of weak innuendo to read, the player also gets to see handfuls of badly drawn or digitised bare breasts, snatch glimpses of girls' 'other bits', and play five banal arcade 'action' sequences (these include a 'sexy' version of Mastermind in which a naked young lady caresses a 'hologram' of your good self, a 'sexy' shoot-'em-up called – this gets me every time – 'Penetration', a 'sexy' card game known as 'Erotic Fight', and a 'sexy' Strip variation of the Scissors-Paper-Stone theme).

This so-called adventure is more linear than ... something appropriate which springs to mind. *Geisha*'s just one long hard slog with far too many delays – now the Real Thing might be all the more enjoyable if it was like that, but sadly the same doesn't hold true for computer entertainment. A more tongue-in-cheek approach would have helped the game – but not much. Anyone that desperate for sexual satisfaction should have a bash at a more productive pasttime and splash out elsewhere. •*GARY PENN*

THE BOTTOM LINE

Geisha's about as user-friendly and sexy as a rotten anchovy – or Wendy James (and she's rubbish so you get the idea). Basically, it's not naughty or nice by any stretch of the imagination.

5 PERCENT

This month has seen a

LIGH

Give most people a gun and they'll soon start reckoning they're anyone from Al Capone to Charles Bronson. Or at least, Colin Campbell did when we sent him off for a play with the Phazer, a new lightgun for the Amiga which, according to manufacturer Trojan, will add that extra realism to a wide range of shoot-'em-ups. Looks like it's time to don your spats and get trigger happy...

Stroll into any arcade and the chances are that the clattering games featuring heavy duty lightguns will have some maniac hanging onto them, killing little soldiers, terrorists or (in one unmemorable instance) zombies at a ridiculous rate. There's little doubt about it that actually having something gun-like to hang on to makes a world of difference to many shoot-'em-ups.

Unfortunately though, when it comes to home computers lightguns have never really had the same impact. Owners of 8-bit computers like the Speccy, or consoles such as the Nintendo, have been treated to lightguns in the past but, on the whole, they've been too cheap and nasty to give the player that real gun-toting feel. The other great problem has been that the software hasn't been there either – okay, so a couple of rather ropey *Op Wolf* clones have cropped up for each one, but until the publishers of 'real' software start to put a lightgun option in their blasters it's hard to see them really catch on.

That's a bit of a shame, because lightguns do provide rather a different, some would say much more directly interactive, experience on straight-on shooting games (*Operation Wolf* et al) than a mouse or joystick. For that reason, at least, we've got to greet the Phazer, a new Amiga compatible

***Alien*: Pretty but limited in gameplay**

desperate quest for a funny, pithy or just plain original lightgun headline, and oh dear...

TEN UP, WISEGUY

lightgun from Welsh peripherals manufacturer Trojan, with open arms.

So what do you get for your £40? Well, the gun (shaped in classic space-age style, and actually – outwardly at least – the same as the one they bundled with the Spectrum two years ago) and two games which would normally cost around £10 each. When you consider the price of a mouse or a dodgy joystick, this seems very reasonable indeed – though, of course, you must remember this is a lot more a novelty item, so you're unlikey to get as much use out of it.

***Skeet Shoot*: A typical lightgun game, and a good way to get used to the whole thing**

Quite a good thing, all told, because if you did decide you wanted to use the thing all the time, we fear you'd run into real problems. The gun is a real lightweight, and I can't help feeling that something more substantial would have been a much more attractive proposition. This cheap feel seems to betray the machine's basic structure too for, after extensive play, the trigger on our model started to stick.

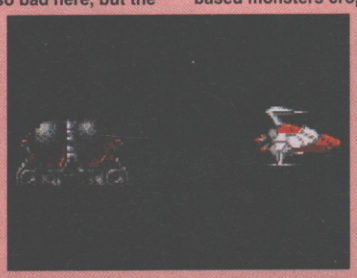
With a range of about four feet (meaning it's fine if you're sitting at your desk, but useless for across the room jobs) the gun is extremely accurate, but this seems to have been achieved at a price – every time you fire at the screen it flashes white for an instant (so the computer can work out where the bullet landed). This is something that happened on the Speccy version too and was a real pain – it's not quite so bad here, but the situation is still less than ideal.

So what about the games? Well, inside the box there's *Skeet Shoot*, a straight clay pigeon boshing affair, and *Orbital Destroyer*, which involves shooting space ships which move mysteriously around on screen. *Skeet Shoot* is by far the most entertaining of the two, with lush graphics and plenty happening. There's a real feeling of aiming and firing which seems to be lacking in *Orbital Destroyer*, much more of an arbitrary exercise. You shoot away at the screen and every so often something dies, though you couldn't really claim (well, not if you're honest) that you were actually aiming at it.

Once you've tired of these two (and we don't think that will take long) it's time to move onto the extra games (which sell for a few pence under £10). By far the best, and almost worth buying the gun for in its own right, is *The Enforcer*, a gangster style shoot-out in front of Chicago buildings. Here, you get to bang away at psycho grannies, bent cops, and of course bloodthirsty mobsters.

As is usual with these affairs, the length of game depends on your depleting energy rating, and this will slip away rapidly if you start killing any of the innocents who pop up. It's all frantic stuff, and kept the more violent members of the AP team amused for hours on end.

A good deal less atrractive is *Aliex* which, despite being the prettiest of the bunch, is by far the most limited. Jungle or desert based monsters crop up, and the backdrops are very Psygnosis, but the baddies are so big that they're far too easy to hit, and it all becomes a tad tedious. Just about all these games have been developed exclusively in-house by the Trojan team, and they're the first to admit that the capabilities of the lightgun have yet to be truly tested. As you read this, various top software publishers are being wined and dined in an effort to persuade them to develop Trojan compatible blockbusters, though there's been no firm takers as yet.



***Orbital Destroyer*: Not really a great introduction to the gun, it has to be said**

Which all leaves us with a fairly vague conclusion. While this gun will hardly get you all excited about lightguns (if you're not already, of course), it could become very different if some interesting software starts to crop up for it. Boring, I know, but to find out if it's a success or a failure we'll simply have to wait and see what support it gets.

***The Enforcer*: A great gangster style shoot out**

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KING'S BOUNTY

Publisher: New World Computing
Price: £25.99
Author: Michael Sean Clement
Price: £25.99
Release: Out now

Oh no, not another one. I'm an awful long way short of being the world's biggest fan of these D&D fantasy role-playing things, so after *Death Knights Of Krynn* I was less than thrilled to get this one to review as well. Imagine my surprise, then, when I found myself spending the best part of the day playing it and having a pretty good time into the bargain. I hate to keep bringing up the comparison, but this reminds me strongly of Julian Gollop's *Chaos* and *Rebelstar*, mostly in its high level of accessibility, playability and presentation. Menus and stats are kept to a minimum, replaced by intuitive and logical controls and lots of action. *King's Bounty* also boasts respectable graphics, a more-than-sufficient amount of speed and fairly minimal disk accessing, and a plot that's so easy to pick up I didn't even have to read the manual for the first three hours of playing. If you've ever fancied getting into this kind of game but have been put off by the sloppy, half-baked programming and design that D&Ders seem to have to put up with, this could be the very game for you. Really, I haven't got the space to tell you about it properly, but trust me – if you're anything but the most diehard zapping fan, you'll love this. •*STUART CAMPBELL*

Only 897 days left to save the kingdom. (The pressure's too much...)

THE BOTTOM LINE

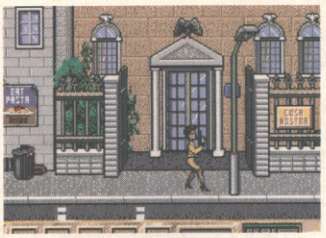
Against all my expectations, this is actually very good indeed. For once, a D&D FRPG has been written to 1991 Amiga standards, and it's bloody good fun. Why not give it a try?

84 PERCENT

CRIME DOES NOT PAY

Publisher: Titus
Price: £25.95
Authors: Corinne and Alexander Yarmitsky
Availability: Out now

By rights, this review should have been written from within the safe confines of a mental institution, for never has your reviewer been closer to eating his own head in a state of maddened frustration than after two hours in the vile company of this pseudo-gangster yarn, *Crime Does Not Pay*.



Programming crap like this does not pay.

It's not that I think there's anything wrong with doing a game based on the undoubted thrills and spills of a gangster's life – where would the movies be without *The Godfather* or *Scarface*, say? – simply that I think making such a hopeless game out of such a gift of a subject matter should be a felony in itself.

So how does it work? Well, you are the head of a criminal organisation – the game is 'endorsed by the Mafia' it says on the box – and it's your job to kill your enemies (ie just about everyone else in the game), make pots of money and finally become mayor of a major American city. This plot, desperately weedy as it is, takes you through a series of inane arcade sequences and unworkable 'pick objects up and use them' scenes.

The arcadey bits promise much at first, with some reasonable graphical representations of urban sidewalks, but get underway and you soon realise the horrid truth – gunplay is useless, killing boils down to a matter of waggling your joystick vaguely in every direction you can think of until some thug hits the deck, scrolling is juddery, loading is slow, gameplay is trashy, the manual is a mess, the so-called humour is fatuous, and... well, I'm sorry but enough is enough. I just can't take any more.

No doubt you'll be able to read a very similar review to this one in six month's time when the game finds itself a home in our Oh Dear – I only hope I won't be the one who has to play the darned thing all over again. • *COLIN CAMPBELL*

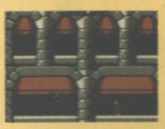
THE BOTTOM LINE

Pick up a thesaurus. Look up the word 'rubbish', and then read the next ten synonyms. You'll get the general idea.

13 PERCENT

Yet another B-movie has its mediocrity captured on the Amiga...

DARKMAN



Inferior *Op Wolf* is the order of the day in this dreary *Darkman* sub-game

***Darkman* – The utterly mindless scrolling smash-their-faces-in sequence**

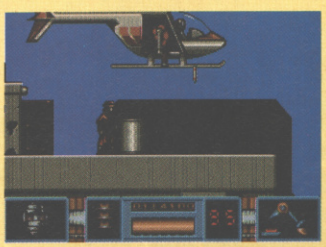
Publisher: Ocean
Price £25.99
Authors: Mick West, James Clarke, Jonathan Dunn
Release: Out now

In which Ocean, with a number of major licences due in the run-up to Christmas, bung out what's hopefully the last in their series of dodgy movie-related runaround things – a series which has included some of Ocean's poorest games in recent memory (*Total Recall*, *Navy Seals*, *Nightbreed* etc etc). *Darkman* takes the usual route, being composed of a number of sub-games all bearing some resemblance to a sequence from the movie, none great games in their own right, but hopefully all combining to make something reasonably entertaining. Of course, normally this approach fails miserably, but Ocean (particularly) have tried it so many times by now, they must be getting good at it. Right?

Right! No, sorry, only joking. *Darkman* surprises no-one very much by being yet another spectacularly mediocre collection of inconsequential little snippets of arcade action which could have been from any of a thousand games were it not for the main sprite being a movie character. The biggest and most complex segments of the game involve, basically, running along the screen battering the fire button incessantly in order to punch and kick the swarms of enemies (two different sprites to choose from!) out of the way. Calling it a beat-'em-up, though, would be an insult to even the poorest of beat-'em-ups, because as long as you keep pummelling away on the fire button, the bad guys simply can't get near you. The only complicated strategy you have to master is to get all of them on one side of you as they appear on screen, then just stand still and biff away as they line up to come at you. No matter how many there are, all will fall prey to your lightning fists.

Things only get worse in the intervening stages, where you have to take pictures of your enemies at a window (via an *Op Wolf*-ish sub-game not unlike the ones in *RoboCop*), in order to gather enough information to make yourself a disguise for the runny-punchy levels. The disguise stops the baddies from trying to hit you (big deal), but runs out after about 10 seconds or so anyway, making it a complete waste of time. Escaping from these first few levels (the second 'proper' level is lengthy and slightly tricky, and sends you all the way back to the start when you lose a life) brings you to the rooftop helicopter chase sequence, where you're chased across some rooftops by a helicopter (so no surprises there). This calls for even less skill than the levels before, as all you can do is run along trying to avoid the huge bombs dropped by the chopper, the explosions of which blow you off the top of the building if you get even remotely close to them.

It was around this point that I got completely fed up with suffering such lazily-designed rubbish and consigned the game to the 'never-to-be-seen-again' drawer, but those of you with lots of time on your hands who can be bothered to play a bit further will find, largely, more of the same in the later levels, with the exception of a neat and imaginative 'driving' sequence, where *Darkman* hangs from a rope underneath a helicopter and has to dodge the oncoming traffic by swinging around. Neat though this is, it isn't worth putting up with the rest of this feeble mediocrity of a game for. • *STUART CAMPBELL*



***Darkman* leaps across tall buildings in a single bound, while up above the bad guys do their very best to gun him down.**

THE BOTTOM LINE

Good graphics, bad sound, and terminally ugly gameplay – it's Another Duff Movie Game, I'm afraid, based on another of Ocean's fairly duff choice of movies. (Oh, and the documentation is a disgrace, too). One more great reason to look forward to Christmas.

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BIG BUSINESS

Publisher: Magic Bytes
Price: £25.99
Authors: DigiTek and Off the Wall Productions
Release: Out now

The words 'business' and 'humour' make an uneasy combination at the best of times. So do 'business' and 'simulation'. And 'humour' and 'simulation'. So a game which bills itself as a 'humourous business simulation' seems, from the outset, to be onto a bit of a loser. Then again, the idea of a 'drive along trying not to crash, game' probably sounded a little shakey to start off with, as did the propects for a 'game where you've got to fit coloured blocks together'. Perhaps *Big Business* is in with a chance after all, eh?

Well, not really. It becomes obvious within picoseconds of loading it that the 'humour' has been flung rather hastily over the 'business simulation' side of things, leaving enough boring numbers and graphs poking through to reveal the game's somewhat flimsy substructure.

I'll start by explaining the simulation bit, shall I? It's a game for one to three players, where each player runs a company (with any shortfall player-wise being made up by the computer). Each company produces the same product (pencils, say), but in competition with each other, and aims to win by making the biggest profit by the end of the game. This is achieved, as you'd expect, by juggling loads of statistics in your company's various departments. And that's where the fun starts.

To start off with you've got to ensure you've got enough raw materials coming in to supply the production line. This can be done by buying them in or building your own factories, both of which require money which can be borrowed if necessary. There are also Research and Development budgets to play with. Other thrills include the possibility of spying on your competitors, attempting to sabotage them or taking them over. You probably could have written the whole thing yourself in Amiga Basic in a couple of hours.

Then there's the humour, which is rather harder to put one's finger on. I'll hazard a guess and assume they're refering to the graphics, laugh-free though they are. They're done in a cartoony style, depicting each member of your management team with a stereotyped portrait – a smarmy advertising executive, a 'northern'-looking production manager, a large-breasted, short-skirted financial officer and so on. They're okay, I suppose, but it's not a style I feel particularly comfortable with. There are also a few nice(ish) touches (I'm desparately trying to look on the bright side here) like failed executives falling past the window and, um... oh dear, I can't think of any more.

Big Business isn't a total dead loss – the programming is well up to scratch – but it's too hopelessly unoriginal to make any sort of an impression. If this really was 'humourous', or could stake any claims to being an accurate 'simulation', it might be excusable, but it's not. In the event, we're only left with 'business', which never was a lot of laughs. • *JONATHAN DAVIES*

Now you can have a real spreadsheet with graphics, in *Big Business*.

THE BOTTOM LINE

A pretty grim affair all round, which shouldn't really have left the drawing board. It would be just as effective running on a Psion Organiser.

40 PERCENT

Remember the old days, eh? The guys behind this one sure do...

MONSTER BUSINESS

Pump up the volume: our hero (we're not sure if he's man or animal) has got a glorified bicycle pump and he's gonna use it!

Publisher: Eclipse
Price: £19.99
Authors: Fabian Hammer, Marc Rosocha
Release: Out now

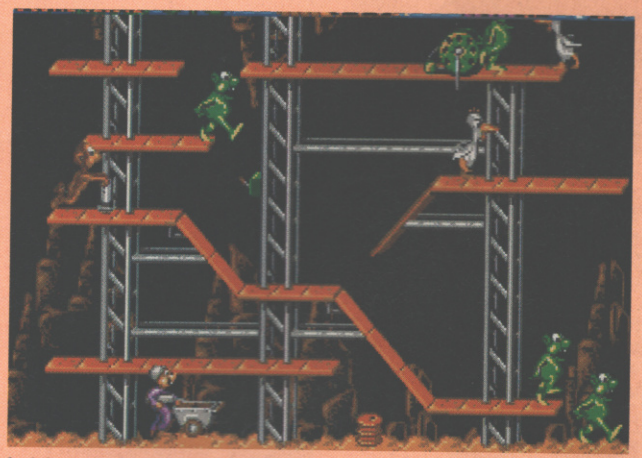
Hmm. It's Euro-software time again, which – it has to be said – isn't usually a time for celebration in the AMIGA POWER offices. Our continental chums haven't fared too well recently, with manky old guff like *Ghost Battle*, *White Sharks*, *Metal Masters*, *Crystals Of Arborea* and *Quadrel* all receiving well-deserved critical savagings in previous issues, so when another of those crap floppy-sleeved boxes that foreign software houses seem to love so much plopped through the letterbox, there was a big fight to see which one of us could get to the door first. Not to review the game you understand, but to get out quickly to keep the urgent dental appointments we'd all suddenly remembered. Rather unsportingly, Gary tripped me up with a promotional baseball bat as we all dashed for the exit, so I was lumped with the job.

The laugh's on everyone else though, because – against all odds – *Monster Business* is a great little game. If you remember the age-old arcade classic *Dig-Dug* you'll be well on the way to understanding *Monster Business*, because the basic principle is the same. You roam around a screen full of monsters, attempting to get on their level and pump them full of air, so that they eventually float away, balloon-like, and disappear. (In *Dig-Dug* you actually blew them up, but let's not quibble about details).

The game also features at least one gameplay element from Toaplan's recent coin-op *Snow Bros*, in that when the monsters have been fully inflated you can bounce them across the screen, whereupon they'll kill any other enemies they collide with. When you clear all the baddies from a level it's onto the next one (of 45), and that, as they say, is all there is to it. Technically there's nothing impressive on show here, and while the graphics have lots of character the animation is of the distinctly two-frame variety (see *Lupo Alberto* a couple of issues ago for a handy comparison of both animation and movement). Musically though, it's a step up from the usual continental stuff – professionally done, it has the odd halfway-decent tune to it for once (indeed, if you aurally squint a bit, you can spot a few famous pop classics in there).

The stand-out feature though has to be the gameplay. Simple, comical, fun and addictive, *Monster Business* plays like all the best arcade games. The cleverly laid-out screens increase in difficulty gradually but perceptibly as the game goes on – you always feel that completing them is within your grasp if you have just one more try – and just when you think things might be starting to get repetitive, the graphic style changes and different aliens with new capabilities appear on the scene. Although the baddies just wander around aimlessly and don't actually chase you at all, they're deceptively dangerous when you tackle them, and this just makes it all the more galling when they – almost accidentally, it seems – kill you. You'll quickly grow to hate the cute and gormless creatures of *Monster Business*, and for me that's always a sign of a good game – it's emotionally involving. I found myself sitting in the office well past going-home time playing this, cursing and shouting at the little beasties on screen, and in no hurry to leave.

There aren't many games which can keep a hard-bitten hack glued to his joystick when he should be relaxing by his own fireside in front of *Coronation Street*, but this is one of them. It's not for fans of complexity or depth, just for people who remember that games are supposed to be entertaining. • *STUART CAMPBELL*



It may not look like much, perhaps, but just you just try putting that joystick down once you've started!

THE BOTTOM LINE

A great little piece of pure arcade fun, at something approaching a respectable price. Looks like 1992 might not be such a bad year for games after all.

80 PERCENT

SECRET OF THE SILVER BLADES

Publisher: SSI/US Gold
Author: In House
Price: £25.99
Release: Out now

Let's do everyone a favour and be brief with this one. If you take everything said in the *King's Bounty* review in these pages and negate it, then you'll have a handy thumbnail guide to *Secret Of The Silver Blades*. After an hour spent ploughing through the manual and the interminable start-up sequence, I was no nearer to understanding the first thing about this game. When I eventually got into it my effort was rewarded with endless hours (or it could have been days) trekking around the most tediously featureless landscape imaginable in desperate search of anything which could vaguely be described as action. Quite some time later I found an interesting-looking doorway and entered it, to find myself back where I'd just come from. Another couple of weeks of traipsing about, and I managed to find some other characters. Entering into battle I picked my way through the unwieldy control system and completely failed to have any fun whatsoever. Later I did some more event-free traipsing, cried a bit from boredom that was almost physically tangible, and went home. I'm sorry if any D&D fanatics out there think I haven't spent nearly enough time playing this game, but it's my life and it's too short to waste any more of it on unadulterated rubbish like this. Actually that's a lie. I'm not sorry at all. •

STUART CAMPBELL

The not-really-very-3D-at-all main movement and combat screen from *Secret Of The Silver Blades*.

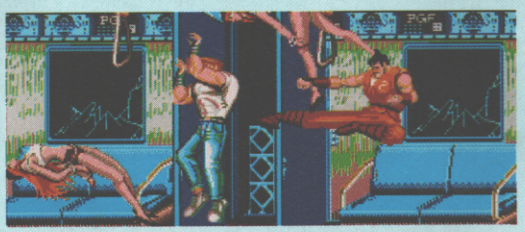
THE BOTTOM LINE

Exactly the kind of crap that the likes of *King's Bounty* will hopefully put an end to. 'Tedious' just doesn't even begin to cover it.

8 PERCENT

Just sometimes, there's nothing quite as satisfying as utterly sadistic bone-crunching...

FINAL FIGHT



One of *Final Fight*'s finer points is the way that each Bad Guy's (or gal's) health is shown: the energy level and name beneath either Good Guy's status relates directly to the last Bad Guy hit.

It's not all blood and guts on the street. At one point the Good Guys get a chance to total Mad Gear's prized car.

Publisher: US Gold
Price: £24.99
Authors: Creative Materials
Release: Out now

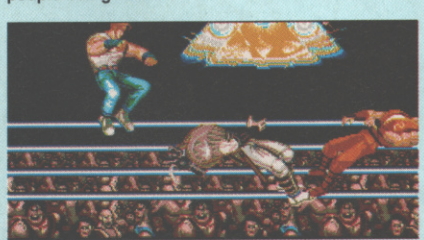
I'll tell you what – the home computer's a marvellous invention, isn't it? It's great. Nowadays, the Good Things In Life are simulated from the comfort and safety of your own pad. There's no need to socialise when you can put the real Uzi down and slap some heads in the front room instead.

There are times when I wonder just what the nation's mothers must make of all this computer fighting malarky. I'm sure they must find it all quite disturbing, what with these little people being bashed with fists and feet and baseball bats – and even axes – on screen. Why, we could be breeding a race of highly-trained killers here through a seemingly innocent medium!

To be honest, I couldn't care less. Look, let's face it: the world's no longer the global garden full of flower-pressing and skipping and kissing and love and stuff it once was. And just so long as all this rucking lark doesn't extend to the frail old dears on the streets then it's all right by me.

In *Final Fight* you get to smack hundreds of ruff 'n' tuff geezers in the teeth. There are a fair few chicks to punch up the bracket, too. Oh dear. It's all getting out of hand, isn't it? Not really, no – it's all essential to the plot, which you get to see at the beginning in a sort of Rock-Hard Computer Comic form.

You see, former street fighter Mike Haggar has been elected mayor with a policy to clean the scum from the city streets. Fair enough, but now the confict's gone up a notch – it's just become something personal. The city's most ruthless gang – the Mad Gear – have kidnapped Mike's daughter, Jessica, who also happens to be emotionally attached to quiff-wielding hardman Cody and a good friend of his tough mate Guy. Can you guess what happens next?



The Good Guys somehow manage to end up in a boxing ring. It's business as usual though, so fight on.

Those are the Good Guys in *Final Fight*. You only get to play one of them at a time (of course) but you can involve a similarly inclined pal by getting him to join in the Good Fight as one of the remaining duo. (Now that's a real hoot – duffing each other up as well as the Bad Guys).

Each of these three Good Guys has his own Special Move. Fat Mike, for instance has this hard crushing-and-smashing-the-opponent's-head-on-the-ground move. Guy wears tights and skips a lot, I can tell, because his secret is the 'Off The Wall' jump which involves spinning around in the air with his leg sticking out like some big girl. Cody's more of what you'd call a bit of ladies' man – he really cuts it with a knife and his version of Guy's move is actually quite butch.

Mike and his mates aren't the only ones with Special Moves at their disposal – the Bad Guys have their own variations on the theme, too. Take the cute cart-wheeling chicks for example, and the fat, baldy slap-head who charges around like a bull.

So what makes *Final Fight* one of the best computer scraps in the world? In its favour there's the fact that almost all of the rest are rubbish, but even so *Final Fight*'s not really that brilliant in any technical way as a beat-'em-up anyway. It is a right laugh to play though, and that's far more important.

Which leads me nicely – and seeing as how you just asked – into some of the Penn criteria for a thumping good beat-'em-up...

It's got to be fast, and that extends to being able to perform 10 million moves (punches, for example) in about two seconds flat. The fighter's repetoire of moves should come from a few, intuitive joystick movements and firebutton presses. Players should then be rewarded by being able to develop skills according to their own ability.

A degree of context sensitivity would also be employed so that the style of move executed would depend on the situation – for example, if the player was very close to an opponent at the time of unleashing an attack then he'd perhaps headbutt him or grab his hair instead of just punching him (as would be the case if the distance between the combatants was greater), and the opponents would be seen to react accordingly.

The characters have to be large enough for the player to be able to see (everyone in *Final Fight* is pretty porky). And the opponents need to be many and varied in terms of intelligence and physical skills – ie, the quantity and type of moves they can perform.

Anyway, *Final Fight* is a step in the right direction until the day that dream beat-'em-up comes. Anyone who enjoyed *Golden Axe* will go a bundle on this – and then some. •

GARY PENN

THE BOTTOM LINE

A fine conversion of the CapCom arcade hit. When it comes to venting frustrations, sadists, pugilistic thrill-seekers, uptight businessmen with ailing control over their bodily functions and marriages, and nine-pound weaklings used to getting sand kicked in their faces are all more than catered for here.

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Nothing quite of *Head Over Heels* quality this month (surprise, surprise) but a fair selection of budgies all the same, including Respray's re-release of one of our favourites – it's quirky, bizarre, and very, very French...

RED HEAT

Publisher: The Hit Squad
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

***Red Heat* – Arnie gets (ahem) a bum deal.**

This is one of the oddest movie licences ever, consisting as it does of utterly banal *Kung Fu Master*-style beat-'em-up gameplay, a ludicrously thin screen (to go with the plot and the gameplay, I suppose), one of the most hilariously crap bits of computer animation ever (watch the Jim Belushi character explain the objective between levels), execrable design (invisible dangers a-go-go), crap sub-games, misleading instructions, duff controls, and a lack of depth that's so total you almost have to believe that it's some kind of political statement.

On reflection, I decided to go with the cover blurb on this one. 'The heat is on'...'The hottest film tie-in to date'...'Feel the heat – *Red Heat*'...it all said one thing. So I chucked it in the bin and set it on fire. • *STUART CAMPBELL*

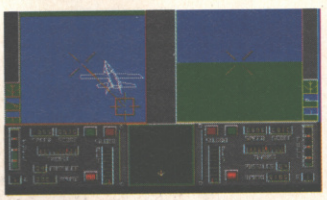
THE BOTTOM LINE
For the sake of balance, I was going to put a list of all the redeeming features here. But there aren't any.
10 PERCENT

SKYCHASE

Publisher: Mirror Image
Price: £9.99
Release: Out now

The premise of *Skychase* is very simple. Two planes battle it out over a flat landscape. And that's it. If this sounds single-minded to you, then you've got the picture. It's a good time to worry when a game bends over backwards to make itself totally user-definable – it often proves to be an attempt to mask a lack of depth. This game gives you a lot to worry about.

Skychase is basically like the dogfighting bit from a flight sim, with every other aspect of the game removed (even the realism). This may sound like a good idea, but in reality it becomes tedious all too soon. Still, I did find myself playing it for a good 20 minutes before it began to feel like a chore, and the two player mode is kind of fun. • *MARK RAMSHAW*



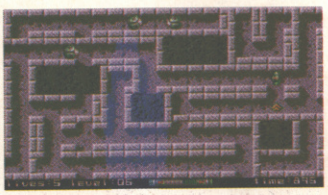
Looping the loop and targeting a missile.

THE BOTTOM LINE
A real minor league sort of game. It doesn't achieve much, but it satisfies when there's nothing else to do.
57 PERCENT

INSECTOR HECTI IN THE INTERCHANGE

Publisher: Hi-Tec
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

This is a conversion of a recent puzzle game from the 8-bit machines, where it was received reasonably well. It's a fairly original concept, placing the player in a messed-up maze with rotating walls, the object being to turn sections round until the maze is complete, while avoiding (or dispatching with the bouncing-ball weapons you carry) the limited number of baddies who stroll around. A simple but addictive concept, *Insector Hecti* somehow doesn't seem to at home on the Amiga. • *STUART CAMPBELL*



Purple puzzling in the intriguing *Hecti*.

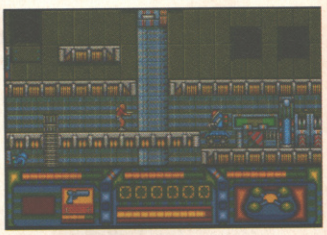
THE BOTTOM LINE
An interesting but insubstantial puzzler that's not at all bad for the price, though it's no *Tetris*.
60 PERCENT

STRYX

Publisher: Sizzlers
Price: £7.99
Release: Late September/early October

As a full price game *Stryx* was terrible, and the buying public were unimpressed. Not surprisingly, the new budget price has done nothing to improve its pallor.

It's all simple run, jump and collect stuff with a number of weapons lying around to use on the dull aliens, and baddie cannons that bimble about to avoid. Trouble is, most of the weapons are ineffectual – while the majority of aliens have a nasty habit of popping up when you have absolutely no chance of wasting them. The sprites are all far too small and the enemies are all cliches sponged from a hundred other platformers. A waste of disk space • *COLIN CAMPBELL*



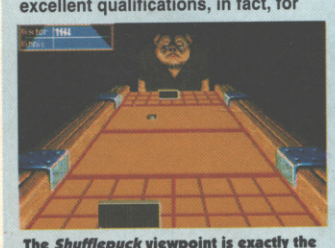
Minuscule, mediocre action in *Stryx*.

THE BOTTOM LINE
Pointless platformer that's not much fun at all. We've come to expect a good deal better from Psygnosis.
28 PERCENT

SHUFFLEPUCK CAFE

Publisher: Respray
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

Shufflepuck Cafe is really nothing more than the twenty year old game *Pong*, twisted into three dimensions and dabbed with some Amiga style graphics and colour – excellent qualifications, in fact, for one of the best budget games around at the moment. That's the computer game explanation anyway – the rest of us may find it easier to imagine air hockey, the real life physical version of this game, where you have to bat a floating ice hockey style puck across a pool-sized table, in an attempt to whack it into your opponent's goal. Games don't come much simpler than this, and thankfully its easy-to-understand immediate appeal has hardly been tampered with at all here.



The *Shufflepuck* viewpoint is exactly the same as that playing real air hockey.

So how does it work on a computer? Well, the viewpoint is exactly the one you'd use to play real air hockey – you are positioned behind the bat (visible as a moveable rectangle near the bottom of the screen) facing any one of nine alien competitors of varying skills and styles. Simply knock the puck towards (and hopefully past) him/her/it – bouncing it off the walls is a good way to try and fool them – then do your best to return their shot. The winner is the first to fifteen, while all manner of variables to toy with – such as different bat size, or obstacles on the 'air hockey' pitch – help liven things up a bit.

Champagne Charlie – the rapidly intoxicated croc from Respray's *Shufflepuck Cafe*.

Much of the rest of the appeal of the game comes from the competitors who hang out at the *Shufflepuck Cafe*. The 'Champagne Charlie' crocodile is quick with the bat, but starts making mistakes as the bubbly he constantly swigs starts to go to his head, while a space mutant with distinctly Churchillian features proves to be a bit of a push-over. Possibly one of the most difficult opponents is the tall woman who can mentally move the puck with out shifting her hands at all!

And that's it really – this is one of those French games, like *North And South*, which is agreeably quirky rather than outright weird, and while a bit too thin-looking at full price proves to be ideal budget fare. It's a shame that there's no two player option been made available, but this remains one of the essential purchases of the month. • *COLIN CAMPBELL*

THE BOTTOM LINE
Simplicity itself, and therefore quite excellent. Whatever you do, don't miss out on the beautifully simple fun of
83 PERCENT

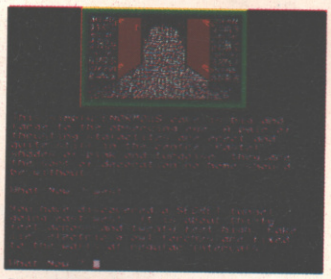
DUNGEONS, AMETHYSTS, ALCHEMISTS AND EVERYTHIN'

Publisher: Atlantis
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

Cover blurb is never a good guide by which to judge a game, but Atlantis, by describing this as 'an amusing, outrageous graphic adventure' are taking liberties. To be brutally frank, this isn't terribly amusing, hardly outrageous, not very graphic and barely passable as an adventure at all.

What it is is a primitive, text input stroll through all the usual pseudo-Tolkeinesque locations, illustrated with a handful of childlike pictures. The plot is as you would expect from such as this, except programmer Robinson has added a few unmistakable (ie bleeding obvious) double entendres, puns and Carry On style gags to spice things up a bit. Unfortunately, the format is hardly conducive to booming fits of laughter, and it will be surprising indeed if this raises anything more than a few pained groans. Try this: 'You are standing on a Sandy Shaw'. Not exactly Tommy Cooper material, is it?

The existence of some dreadful text lingering on large erect stalagmites seems



***Dungeons* etc. Laugh? I nearly enjoyed it.**

to have been the justification for a '16' rating, but let's be honest here, this is nothing more than a cheap trick to lure those people who are rather younger than the so-called age threshold. If you're going to be outrageous, for God's sake be outrageous. Otherwise the effect is akin to that of your Gran coyly trying to tell a blue joke that you heard at the age of eight.

For the dwindling number of text adventure fans there's nothing new here whatsoever, and those people who buy this in the hope of some titilation deserve all they get – which actually adds up to very little indeed. • *COLIN CAMPBELL*

THE BOTTOM LINE

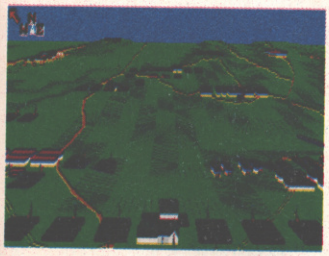
Billed as a humourous adventure, but it's really nothing of the sort. Appalling in just about every way.

15 overall

WATERLOO

Publisher: Mirror Image
Price: £9.99
Release: Out now

Personally, I don't care if no-one ever plays a Napoleonic wargame, computerised or otherwise, ever again. I say this only because some readers notice that I review war and adventure games more than any other type and sometimes think I'm on a crusade to convert people to



***Waterloo* isn't exactly the fastest wargame in the world. This 3D picture just to over five seconds to appear on screen, so I hope you appreciate it.**

playing them. Far from it. Most reviewers don't want to touch this kind of game. I do simply because someone has to (it's a dirty job, etc).

Though some PSS wargames look as though they've gone off half-cocked, *Waterloo* not only seems meant, it also qualifies as a fair paradigm of what a new-wargamers-start-here game should be like. The documentation glides from one subject to the next without introducing too many ambitious ideas too soon for the average newcomer.

It's a one- or two-player game with user-definable levels of complexity. However you choose to play it all the moves are carried out by typing in sentences of orders to the units under your command. Since all the types of orders, words you can use and what they mean to the computer are explained in the manual, this is as easily done as it is said. It does mean, though, that a thorough read of the manual is a good idea.

Units of soldiers look like colour coded ranks of liquorice allsorts and there are few effects visual or otherwise to stimulate the imagination. Yet once you get to grips with the forces you're commanding and you see the consequences of your orders unfold, anyone with a jot of curiosity will wonder just what it takes to win. And there's the rub. *Waterloo* moves at the kind of pace that makes continental drift look like prime time TV. But play a couple of well thought out moves per night and the satisfaction you'll derive from winning will be more akin to contentedly finishing off a main meal than the lollipop level of glee normally gleaned from bashed-out budget baloney. • *SEAN MASTERSON*

THE BOTTOM LINE

Slow as hell, and not without its faults. Still, it's a touch of class in comparison to most of its competition.

71 overall

SORCERER

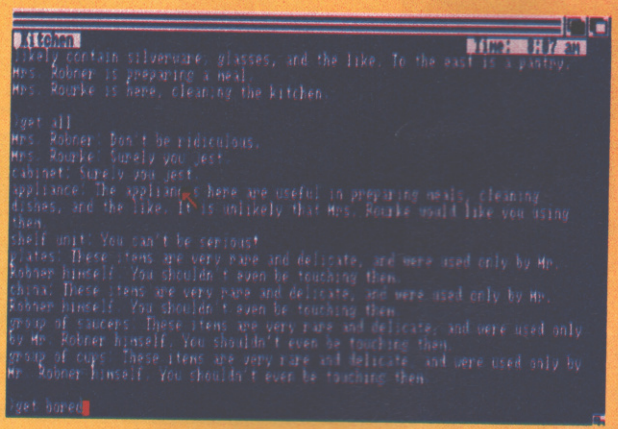
Publisher: Infocom/Mastertronic
Price: £9.99
Release: Out now

Infocom games ain't what they used to be. The devilish packaging and design that used to have potential punters drooling over them back in 1984 have been dispensed with. *Sorcerer* used to have an Infotator, a rotating data wheel that served as off-disk protection. In this re-released edition of *Sorcerer* the Infotator data has been transcribed to the manual and is served up with with a typically cryptic Infocom joke about Infocom going bust (or "The Frobozz Magic Grommet Company" as it's called). From there, *Sorcerer* continues from where *Enchanter* left off (after you killed the dread Krill and were rewarded with a position in the Guild Of Wizards).

I ought to mention that you die a lot. If you've played Infocom games before (and died a lot) you might say, 'So what?' But in *Sorcerer* you have a choice of painful deaths to experience before you even get going. You begin the game in the throes of a nightmare and it doesn't matter what you do. Climb the tree to escape the hellhound and a viper will get you. Run from the hellhound and there's a minefield, double death by arachnids, fast-frying lightning and swarms of wasps. For starters. Even if you type 'wake up' you return to a scene of carnage at the Guild in which devils have slaughtered your comrades. On seeing you wake they turn their attention towards fresh meat...

Although it's one of Infocom's easier adventures to solve, it's still blindingly difficult to see the clues, even when they're being paraded around in front of you by one of the game's characters.

For this reason, clues are paraded around by several characters as a sure-fire means of driving you up the wall, around the ceiling and back down the other side. Another piece of timeless magic from Infocom.
– 82 Percent • *SEAN MASTERSON*



Infocom adventures may not look like much, but play one for five minutes and you'll get drawn into a thoroughly believable world. Attempting to pick up literally everything in the room elicits some typical Infocom replies, in *Deadline*.

DEADLINE

Publisher: Infocom/Mastertronic
Price: £9.99
Release: Out now

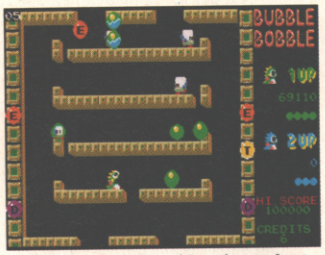
Deadline is probably best put into perspective by describing it as the kind of game that makes *Sorcerer* look as though it had been written for five year olds with learning difficulties. With the clogs of a wealthy industrialist popping before you can say 'cobblers' (hurrah, someone else for a change), the deceased's attorney calls you, Chief of Detectives, to investigate. Marshall Robner died on his estate from an overdose of the drug Ebullion at 1am, plus or minus one hour. Everybody's statements add up to a case of suicide but you smell foul play and want to prove otherwise. You have twelve hours to find motive, means and opportunity.

Written in 1982 by one of Infocom's first generation adventure game designers, Marc Blank, *Deadline* still stands up as one of the best adventure games ever written. It's not just a mystery. It's an unfolding story that delivers danger and deceit in abundance, thanks to the remarkably programmed independent actions of the suspects. You'll know when you've solved it but the trouble is, you'll think you've solved it when you haven't. Games this good appear about once per decade. – 87 Percent
• *SEAN MASTERSON*

THE RAINBOW COLLECTION

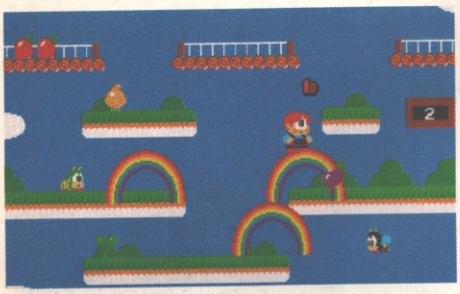
Publisher: Addicted To Fun
Price: £19.99
Release: Out now

Cutie alert! Cutie Alert! If you hate anything fluffy, cuddly or loveable, stop reading now. The first release on Ocean's new Addicted To Fun compilations label comprises three of the most adorably sweet (or grindingly twee and sickly, depending on your viewpoint) games ever to grace the Amiga.



100 screens bubbling with action and cute appeal, in *Bubble Bobble*.

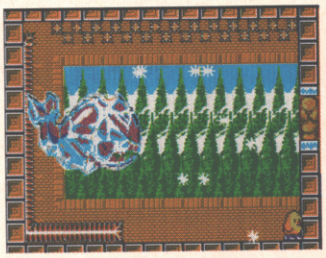
There's *The New Zealand Story*, featuring Tiki the kiwi on a mission to rescue all his kiwi chums, who've been kidnapped by an evil giant walrus. Then there's *Bubble Bobble*, in which Bub and Bob the dinosaurs strive to rescue their girlfriends from the evil Baron Von Blubba by trapping nasty monsters inside bubbles and popping them. And finally (Cyril) there's *Rainbow Islands*, the sequel to *Bubble Bobble* where Bub and Bob's sons, Bubby And Bobby, have to rescue their dads and the rest of their family from the evil Prince Of Darkness who has imprisoned them on a series of islands which are slowly sinking into the sea. All of the games feature in the Amiga Power All-Time Top 100, at positions 19, 53 and Number One respectively.



Probably the best arcade conversion in the world.

Now, the fact of the matter is that any self-respecting Amiga owner should already have all of these games. Still, there are doubtless some of you out there who are new to the whole business, so here's a quick rundown on why you should get out and buy this compilation right now. *The New Zealand Story*, far from being just a pretty face, is one of the most challenging and addictive arcade games you're ever likely to play. The gorgeous graphics are the most striking feature, but the toughness of the gameplay in some of the later levels is astounding. *Bubble Bobble* is one of the best ever games for two people playing simultaneously, and its hundred levels provide a challenge to test the most talented of gamers.

And *Rainbow Islands*? As the mathematically-competent among you will already have deduced, *Rainbow Islands* is, in our not-even-slightly-humble opinion, the best Amiga game there's ever been. The ridiculously simple gameplay hides a myriad of hidden features and bonuses, and the difficulty is perfectly balanced so that anyone can play the first few levels, but hardly anyone's ever finished it. In common with the other two titles it's a superb (though not quite perfect) conversion of the coin-op, and it's so playable it almost defies belief. If you haven't got it, go and stick your head in a bucket of water until you see sense. At less than seven quid a game, this compilation could well be the best value-for-money the Amiga has ever seen. I just can't recommend it highly enough. • *STUART CAMPBELL*



Having a whale of a time in *The NZ Story*.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Are you clinically insane? In prison? Totally stupid? A hammerhead shark? If the answer to all of these questions is 'no', go out and buy *The Rainbow Collection* today. In fact, even if it isn't, buy *The Rainbow Collection* anyway.

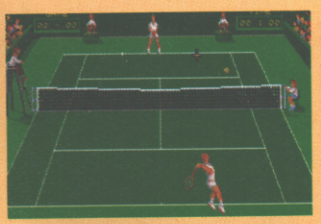
93 PERCENT

GRANDSTAND

Publisher: Domark
Price: £29.99
Release: Out now

Just so's you know, the box of this compilation informs purchasers that 'Gazza' is a trademark of Paul Gascoigne Promotions Ltd. (I trust you'll all be coughing up the royalty payments every time you say it from now on). This sporting collection features four games, covering tennis, golf, motor racing and football. Ubi Soft's *Pro Tennis Tour* kicks things off (if you'll forgive the mixed metaphor) with a passable (sorry) game, the best point (sorry) of which is the tasteful sound. Its worst faults (sorry) are the lack of control you have over shot direction and the incredibly annoying copy protection. The net (sorry) result is a distinctly average game which simply doesn't match (sorry) up to the competition, especially its own sequel *Pro Tennis Tour 2*. You might quite like it, but you certainly won't love it. (Sorry).

The Gazza(TM) hype machine goes horribly (horribly) wrong.



***Pro Tennis Tour* – almost, but not quite, pretty good.**

World Class Leaderboard is another casualty of progress. Until recently this was the Number One Amiga golf sim, but with the release of *PGA Tour Golf*, it's suddenly looking its age. All the same, it's still an excellent little game, as a No 47 spot in the AMIGA POWER All-Time Top 100 shows, and it's probably the star of this compilation.

Continental Circus was never the most stunning arcade racing game, although it was popular because of the 'real' 3D view employed with the aid of a special visor. The Amiga version loses this gimmick, but remains a fast and slick race game with a couple of novel features (if you crash, you can often survive until you reach the pits and repair your car) and is well worth a play or three.

***World Class Leaderboard* – upstaged, but still a classic.**

Clowning around in *Continental Circus*, the car getting dangerously close to the edge.

The last, and least, game of the set is '*Gazza's*' (TM) *Super Soccer*, a truly awful football game with a stupidly confusing mixed perspective, stupidly confusing controls, comprehensive but a stupidly unfriendly (and confusing) front end, an irritating 'commentator' who grunts "Have a shot" whenever anyone comes within 30 yards of goal, and almost no sign of 'Gazza' (TM) himself at all. The game bears as much resemblance to actual football as 'Gazza's' (TM) performance in the FA Cup Final did, and his subsequent career-threatening injury is no more than a just reward for allowing his name to be attached to this software atrocity.

The final analysis, then, gives us one excellent game, one good game, one average game and one completely dire one. Can't say I'm impressed. • *STUART CAMPBELL*

THE BOTTOM LINE

Since the best two games here are available individually on budget labels, you'd be a lot better off just getting those instead for £8 apiece and not bothering with the other two.

54 PERCENT

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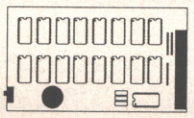

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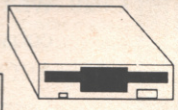

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PD

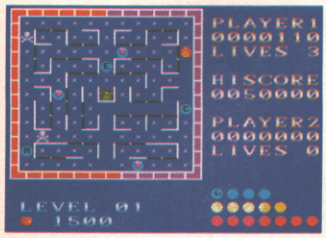
It's software, it's free (practically), and it's great (more often than not). What else could you possibly need to know? Stuart Campbell tells you everything and more.

RATINGS: ★★★★★ Excellent ★★★★★ Nearly there ★★★★ Very good ★★★ Has its moments ★★ Flawed ★ Dire

LADYBUG

(Softville, disk UGAM1)

One of the earliest arcade games, and one of the first to expand interestingly on the maze theme pioneered by *Pac-Man*, was a game called *Ladybug*. The big innovation



***Ladybug*: nothing more, or less, than a version of *PacMan* with moveable walls.**

in *Ladybug* was that the maze walls weren't fixed, but were in fact turnstiles which you could turn round, altering the whole complexion of the game at a stroke. This PD version captures all the features of the coin-op game (with a couple of little extras), and even adds a groovy soundtrack of New Order's Blue Monday to the action. A small error in the programming causes some longish pauses between lives and levels, but nothing too annoying, and in any case a corrected version should be available by the time you read this. This *Ladybug* is just as good as the original, and with three other games on the disk (including the rather excellent *Rollerball*), you shouldn't need me to tell you to go and buy a copy.

VERDICT: A great vintage arcade game comes to the Amiga, without losing anything in the translation. Yet another one to add to your bulging Nostalgia Collection. **

ED209 – THE REVENGE

(Strictly PD, disk G251)

The first of two *RoboCop*-related games this month, *ED209 – The Revenge* is less

Pretty and fairly brutal: the writing's on the wall for our old friend ED209. (Sorry).

of a game, more of a demo with an interactive element. Poor ED209 is fed-up of having his plans for world domination thwarted by that old killjoy RoboCop, so he decides to, er, walk along a very long street with a graffiti-covered wall and kill everything he comes across. These usually take the form of a superhero or cartoon character (Batman, Turtles etc), who appears at the end of the street and shoots ED if he doesn't blow him away within about 10 seconds (yes, you're right, it isn't the toughest game in the world). Still, the graphics are good, the wall contains a few good gags, and the sound effects are brilliant, solid and brutal just like in *RoboCop* itself. There are some great touches too, like the way shadows are cast by the street lights – the effect of which is in truth the major raison d'etre of the game.

**VERDICT: Dinky sort-of shoot-'em-up, worth getting just so you can shoot a 'Hero' Turtle 500 times for fun. **

BUG BASH

(Amiganuts)

A curiosity here, in fact I think it's a first. *Bug Bash* was once a commercial game (released as part of a two-game package by Mutation Software with a shoot-'em-up called *Nucleus*), but now

Yet another bug-ridden Amiga game...

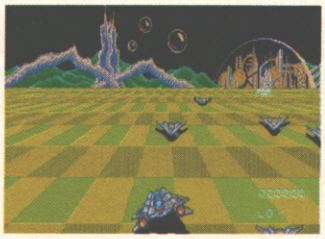
it's entered into the Public Domain (sort of) via an exclusive licensing deal with PD people Amiganuts. The gameplay is pretty elementary, featuring you, the player, as a ladybird with a helicopter jetpack on a mission to clear up lots of rubbish from the garden, all the time being hindered by lots of other insect-type baddies. The graphics and sound befit a one-time commercial release but the game itself is simplistic and repetitive, and doesn't take very long to become boring. Still, as PD you can't really complain, and the price is a fair reflection on what you're getting.

VERDICT: Cute but limited (maybe good for kids). An interesting idea to stick once commercial games through the PD, one that it'd be interesting to encourage. *

BUCK ROGERS

(Strictly PD, disk G269)

Something's gone wrong here, I think. *Buck Rogers* is an uncomplicated shoot-'em-up which looks like *Space Harrier* and plays like *Galaxians*. This is all very well



Yes, it's *Buck Rogers*. (Hope I get a go at blasting Tweeky later on...)

and groovy and would make for an addictive zapper if it wasn't for one thing: you can never have 'one more go' in *Buck Rogers*, because when you lose all of your five lives, you, er...get another five. And then another five. And then another five, and so on. This built-in infinite lives cheat spoils the game to quite an extent, but it's still good fun for the short time it'll take you to get through all the various levels. It looks lovely and the sound is pleasingly solid, but unless a 'proper' version comes out, then I can't honestly say it's an unmissable purchase.

VERDICT: Nifty blaster somewhat wrecked by the inexplicable lack of game-ending death. If you can get it without infinite lives though, it'd be well worth having.

WIZZY'S QUEST

(X-Press PD)

Solomon's Key. Great, wasn't it? One of the best arcade puzzle games ever, but one which didn't really get the credit it deserved, either as a coin-op or as a home computer conversion. *Wizzy's Quest* takes the basic gameplay element of *Solomon's Key* (the building and destroying of blocks) and puts it into a (slightly) more traditional platform game structure, resulting in an intriguing game of manipulation and strategy. Control is just a bit on the sticky side, but this is more of a minor irritation than anything else, since with no time limits it doesn't affect the gameplay to any noticeable extent.

Wizzy's Quest is a great puzzle arcade game (as opposed to the other way around), and it's got just the right balance between jumping around and sitting down and thinking to make it a strategic classic. If this is your sort of thing then this'll be your sort of thing.

VERDICT: Excellent game that's a bit short on action for arcade purists, but loads of fairly engrossing intelligence-stretching fun for the rest of us. **

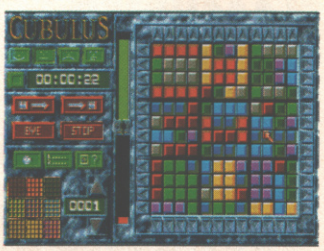
If you can get past this screen, can you tell us how you did it? Pretty please?

CUBULUS

(NBS, disk G175)

Demo programmer Tobias Richter is something of a legend in PD coding circles, so you'd be forgiven for expecting something a little bit special from this foray (with a couple of chums) into the world of games. And that's pretty much what you get in this gorgeously-presented puzzle game with several elements of *Rubik's Cube* thrown in. You are presented with a 3x3 block of 4x4 squares made up of variously-coloured blocks, and you choose a number of mixing-up moves (like twists of the Cube), which you then have to untangle to restore the board to its original state. There's a time counter, and it doesn't take very many moves to reduce the board to an unfathomable mess of colour, so you can be assured of a real challenge. The music isn't much cop (technically great but tune-free, as so often seems to be the case with Amiga music), but otherwise this is a seriously classy piece of mental torture.

VERDICT: For all fans of computerised mindbending, this ranks right up there with most well-known commercial releases. Professional looking and generally rather slick. **



***Cubulus* – only 10 moves in and nope, I can't do it either. Not a hope.**

PD

NUCLEUS
(Amiganuts)

Here we have the very game once released with *Bug Bash* (see review on this page), now also exclusively licensed to Amiganuts. *Nucleus* is a horizontally-scrolling shoot-'em-up in the *R-Type* mould, and features extremely good parallax graphics that are well up to much of the competition in the genre (*Ziriax*, *X-Out*, *Atomic Robokid* etc). Unfortunately the gameplay doesn't match up, being slow and uneventful with unimaginative aliens and dim attack patterns.

The customary power-ups which you can bolt onto your weedy spaceship are a better set than usual, but when you die you lose them (of course) and it becomes even tougher than in most games to progress without them. Even on the later levels and

Blurring the line between commercial and public domain software still further, it's *Nucleus*, originally sold with *Bug Bash* (reviewed on the previous page).

with lots of speed-ups things never get very exciting, and the pretty graphics seem to have largely gone to waste. Again though, you're not getting a bad deal at a PD price, and as there aren't many other PD games in this particular market, it has to be worth giving a go. If you really, really want a shoot-'em-up, and you really are pretty skint, that is.

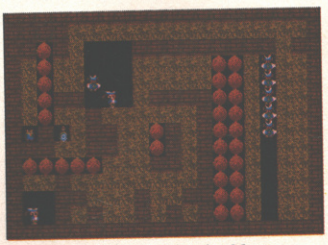
VERDICT: Not a bad shoot-'em-up, but then not a very good one either. You can see why it never made it commercially, but for a couple of quid for the PD re-release, it's worth owning. ***

FLASCHBIER
(Softville, disk UGAM2)

A game which has been around in the Public Domain for quite a while now, *Flaschbier* is basically a simplified version of *Boulderdash*, in as much as it's got the boulders and the enemies, but not the diamonds. The object of each screen is simply to reach the exit, but that's much easier said than done, as the pace of the enemies and the layouts of the screens make every level a tricky little teaser.

Presentation is very nice and the in-game music is superb, and together with the imaginative, fast-moving and addictive gameplay and cute graphics, everything adds up to make *Flaschbier* one of the best PD games available to date. This is quite simply brilliant – every home should have one.

VERDICT: Excellently-structured puzzle/arcade game that's a definite must for *Boulderdash* lovers, and everyone else too for that matter. ***

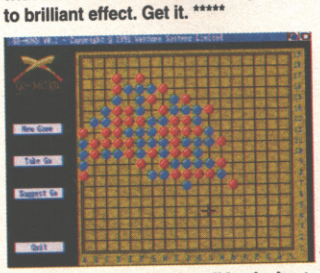


Brainless *Boulderdash*-inspired fun in the difficult-to-pronounce *Flaschbier*.

GO-MUKU
(Capricorn Computers, disk CC Games 27)

On this disk from new name Capricorn are *China Challenge II* (an updated version of the *Shanghai* clone reviewed last month with four stars), *Roll On* (a version of the classic Chinese puzzler *Soko Ban*), a *Missile Command* game, and best of all, *Go-Muku*. This is another age-old Japanese game, the object of which is to complete a line of five stones on a large board. As with most games of this nature, it has incredibly simple rules but is hugely difficult to master, and this particular version looks beautiful, with a computer opponent who plays a mean game. There's very little else to be said about it really, except that it's absolutely gorgeous and I love it.

VERDICT: A superb compilation combining mind-stretching strategy with brainless arcade reaction games to brilliant effect. Get it. ***



***Go-Moku* – If you think it's all beginning to get a bit complicated at this stage, well, you're not too far wrong.**

ROBOCOP GOES TO IRAQ
(Strictly PD, disk G252)

No RoboCop perhaps, but at least you get a decent game with *Middle East Mania*.

MIDDLE EAST MANIA
(Strictly PD, disk G250)

A couple of games that I've lumped together now, because they share a similar theme, they were both written with *Shoot-'Em-Up Construction Kit*, and they look distinctly alike too. The *RoboCop* game mixes vertical and horizontal scrolling, but the character himself doesn't, with the same feebly-animated sprite used whichever way you're walking. Movement between levels seems to be largely arbitrary, the front end is remarkably shabby, and some nice sampled effects can't turn this sow's ear of a cash-in into a silk purse. *Middle East Mania* (or *Middle East Madness* as the title screen would have it), on the other hand, is equally ideologically unsound but a significantly better game. Your sprite actually turns to face the way he's going, gameplay is faster and calls for more skill, there's an acceptable amount of target variation and the *Commando*-style gameplay holds together quite respectably. The excessive amount of lives you're endowed with knock down the addictive potential considerably, but all the same this is a nifty slice of fun which would stand up by itself without the dodgy Gulf connection. If you must have a Desert Storm simulation, at least make sure it's one with a halfway-decent game included.

VERDICT: *RoboCop Goes To Iraq* is a tacky concept executed even more tackily, but *Middle East Mania* is a reasonable SEUCK game which is as good as most of its peers. Bin the former, go for the latter.
R.G.T.I.* * *M.E.M.* **

However much you love the old tin constable, you'll not find you get much fun from *RoboCop Goes To Iraq*.

POM POM GUNNER
(Start Computer Systems)

This American shareware game features some of the best graphics you're ever likely to see on a PD game, digitised shots of scenes from the WWII battle in the Pacific between the US and Japanese navy and air forces. You man a ship's gun, and waves of Japanese planes (more digitised graphics) fly past on their way to attacking Pearl Harbour (or other targets, depending on which level you're on). In the second or two that they're in your sights, you have to shoot them down, whereupon they burst into flame and plummet, smoke trailing, into the ocean. You have to be careful not to shoot US planes, though, or you'll be reprimanded by the top brass and lose lots of points (in fact, I haven't managed to register a positive score yet). That's all there is, and if the truth be told it's not all that much of a game. The waves go on for far too long, and the end of a game isn't something I've had the stamina to reach yet. Still, while you're playing it's pretty gripping, and it'll take some time for the novelty of the excellent graphics to wear off (indeed, they'll keep you playing just to get to later levels and see more). Take a look.

At last! A chance to relive Pearl Harbour in the comfort of your own home!

VERDICT: Not a particularly great game, but wonderful-looking, and as PD it's cheap enough to be worth getting just to impress Grandad. **

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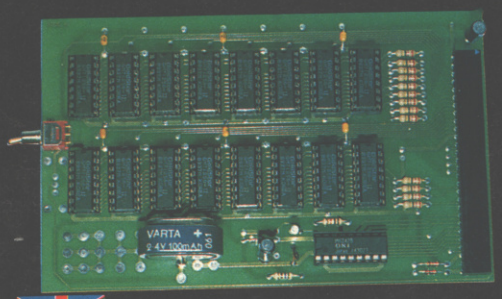

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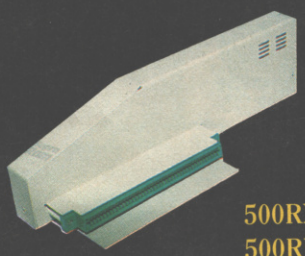

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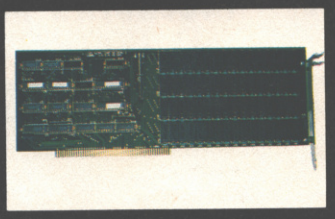

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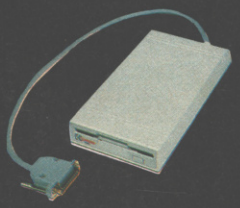

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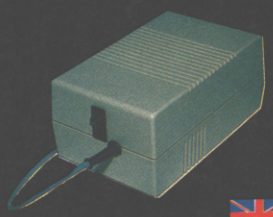

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Phew, the excitement's too much!

That we can still get our hands on, that is.

What's it all about then?

So what has brought about this mood of generosity? Well, Mirrorsoft have gone all nice and slushy because everyone is going potty over their latest game *Mega lo Mania* (AP rated 90 percent). If you don't already know, it's a laugh-a-minute everyday tale of world domination (featuring oodles of pretty tricks and infuriating gameplay).

Here are the questions...

Enough of this faff and fuffle. It's time for the questions. Since this is all related to *Mega lo Mania*, the theme is power and domination. Unfortunately, to stand a chance of winning you're going to have to swot up on insane megalomaniacs from history. Here goes then:

1) Where was Mussolini's blood, an hour after he died?
2) Complete this dubious Julius Caesar phrase: "Infamy, infamy..."
3) In the latter years of World War II, the British had an 'affectionate' nickname for Stalin. What was it?

What you have to do?

Simply jot the correct answers to our tricky trio of questions onto the back of a postcard, and post it to us at: AMIGA POWER FOR PRESIDENT, 29 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon, BA1 2BW. Don't forget to include your name and address...

RULES AND REGULATIONS

- The closing date for this competition is October 31st 1991. Entries received later than that haven't a hope.
- On all matters relating to this competition the editor's decision is final.
- Employees of Future Publishing and Mirrorsoft are not eligable to enter this competition. Neither are Stalin, Mussolini, or Julius Caesar.
- Only those games still stocked by Mirrorsoft can be included, but this includes pretty much all of them anyway (35 titles in all).

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This month – hurrah! – we introduce a prize winning element to the letters page to spice things up a bit. Yes, from now on, the writer of not the longest, not the crawliest, but the MOST INTERESTING letter we receive gets at least £50 worth of software and perhaps anything up to £100 – if we think it's good enough. Get scribbling...

DO THE write THING

● **Address your letters to AMIGA POWER, Beaufort Court, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon, BA1 2BW**

Dear AMIGA POWER,

I have just purchased your magazine and felt I must write and ask your advice. With so many new magazines on the shelves I tried very hard to resist buying your mag as I already purchase at least two each month – one has to draw the line somewhere! However, the temptation of the coverdisk and the games reviews got the better of me and I found myself coming home clutching your mag under my arm. How I wished I'd purchased it earlier! From now on I think I will resist the other two and buy yours instead. Congratulations on a lovely mag – your honest reviews of the games are a real help and I agree with many of your opinions. Which brings me to the point of this letter.

A couple of weeks ago I spotted what looked like a real 'cute' game called *Jungle Book*. I have a nine-year-old son and he and I love games based on children's stories or with cute characters in them. So I purchased the game, came home and and could not believe what a load of rubbish it was! I did actually return to the shop and ask if I could exchange it but to no avail. I do appreciate the policies of shops so I accepted this and came away putting it down to experience, but still fuming that I had wasted precious money on a game we'll never use. If I had bought your magazine earlier I would have seen your opinion of the game and avoided it, but alas too late – I'm lumbered.

I know it's only a budget game, but so is *Treasure Island Dizzy*, which is wonderful. After reading your comments I felt relieved that someone else shared my opinion and decided that I would write to Monkey Business themselves and tell them exactly what I thought of their game. But of course there is no address on the packaging. Could you possibly tell me the address so that I could let them know how disgusted I am that games like this reach the shop shelves?

Yours hopefully,
Mrs L. Cooper, Nottingham.

I'm afraid I don't have an address to hand, Mrs Cooper, but Monkey Business is a label of Electronic Zoo, and their telephone number is 0285 641541. Hope this helps.

Dear Poor Excuse For A Magazine,

Picture this. Friday 26th July. Rushed into Smiths to get the latest issue of AMIGA POWER. Looks good, I thought. Got home and booted up the disk. *Beast Busters* – playable level (really?). Specially prepared for AMIGA POWER? It lasted all of about two minutes!

The Executioner – new label Hawk ought to pack up their bags and admit defeat with this exclusive, yet totally bloody impossible, preview.

Could it get any worse? Of course it blooming well could!

Pharaoh's Curse – I am all for converting classic 8-bit games to 16-bit machines, but how can crap like this be called 'classic' when nobody's ever even heard of it?

Mazeman – This game is so crap, I wouldn't pay £2.95 for it, even if it were exactly the same on a VIC-20.

Dad – If no-one at AP has completed it, how can you be sure that it's possible?

According to the title on page eight, the above-mentioned games are the best in PD. What a load of rubbish! If this is the best PD has to offer, all the PD libraries would wind up bankrupt!

On the front cover, you have stated that AP is 'a magazine with attitude'. Well, if your bad attitude towards your cover disks continues, I shall not be buying AP again.

Yours,
Kris King, Droitwich

PS I am not trying to be offensive, but if this letter is not responded to, it is obvious that you can't take criticism AT ALL.

Well Kris, you nearly blew your chances with that PS (just another variation on the feeble 'I bet you won't print this letter' challenge), but since I'm in a good mood today, I'll reply to your points individually. Yes, the Beast Busters *demo WAS a playable level (not much room for debate on that one actually), and as for* The Executioner, *well, another correspondent this month (Shaun Wilson of Rye, if you're interested) feels that it was 'excellent, as it makes a nice change to be able to use skill instead of just speed and luck on a game'. Maybe you just need to practice a bit more, Kris?*

As for Pharaoh's Curse, *what do you want us to do, circulate the entire readership every month to make sure everybody's familiar with everything on that issue's disk? Lots of other people have heard of the game – if you haven't, then it's all the more reason why we should show you what you've been missing all these years.* Pharaoh's Curse *was one of the most popular games of its day, we can't help it if you're not old enough to remember it from the first time around.*

Mazeman? *Well, we weren't asking you to pay £2.95 for it, were we? It was one game of five on a disk given away with a 108-page magazine. If you don't like* Pac-Man *that's a shame, but* Mazeman *is a great conversion of one of the all-time arcade classics, and that's reason enough to put it on our disk.*

Finally, the 500 or so readers who've sent us Dad *solutions (at the time of writing) would confirm quite unequivocally that the game can be completed. Again, maybe you just need to try a bit harder...*

And now (ta-da!) it's time for... Stuart Hardy Corner!!

Dear Sir,

Like most computer users, I'm waiting in anticipation for all the new re-releases which are currently flooding the Amiga software market. Games such as *Tennis Cup*, *Waterloo* and the Infocom adventures are bound to do very well indeed. People who missed them first time around can now add these titles to their disk collection at a fraction of their original cost.

No doubt the majority of Amiga gamesplayers will have noticed that all the recent budget companies package their products in small, non-glossy but adequate boxes. I presume this is because these companies have too little cash to waste on large, flashy boxes. For this I am grateful. A game is a game no matter what the size and style of its packaging – after all, you should never judge a book by its cover.

Why some software houses spend huge amounts of money on packaging I'll never know. Although big boxes may look attractive, they have the reverse effect of being rather bulky and taking up too much shelf space in small computer shops. Even →

£50 SOFTWARE WINNER

Dear AMIGA POWER,

First of all, I would like to send my congratulations to the team for producing a magazine which soars right to the top of an overcrowded market. AMIGA POWER's fresh and intelligent style takes me back to those halcyon days of early Crash and Zzap!. Your reviews are detailed, witty, well illustrated and often raise interesting issues, such as how thoughtless presentation can ruin a game's atmosphere, and the value of good game packaging. Furthermore, your interviews are always absorbing, it's reassuring to know that programmers are not the faceless number crunchers which some magazines would have us believe.

If I had to make a criticism (*I think you'd better, or people will think we're making this letter up -Ed*), it would concern your rating system. Over the years I have become increasingly disillusioned with the now universal percentage rating system. Games are reviewed subjectively and cannot be rated with the accuracy that a percentage system demands. So, what is the point of arguing over a couple of percent? Secondly, a game receiving less than 40 percent is simply not worth buying. Why bother trying to assess its relative crapness? Who cares if it's worth 3 percent or 33 percent?

I am in favour of a simple five star system, set out along the following guidelines:

***** A masterpiece, set to leave its mark on the software industry for some time to come.

**** An excellent game, maybe a couple of niggles or a lack of innovation prevents it from attaining five star status.

*** A decent enough effort, especially if you enjoy this style of game.

** May have a couple of redeeming features, but even ardent followers of this type of game will be hard pushed to get their money's worth.

* A complete waste of time and money.

Thanks a lot,
Matthew Skidmore, Halesowen

We spent a lot of time at the launch of this mag deciding what (if any) rating system we should use. In the end we plumped for the single percentage system, because it's flexible and informative without being fussy. You can always operate the star thing yourself, simply by dividing our marks into categories (0-20 percent is one star, 21-40 percent is two stars etc) if you want to, but our opinion is that to do things that way allows for no distinction between games which could be as much as 20 percent apart in real terms. It's fine for a rough guide (like The Bottom Line), but really, it's much too vague for what you yourself admire as our 'detailed' reviews. And just to be nitpicky, you ask "why bother if a game's worth 3 percent or 33 percent?" Since those would equate in your system to two different marks (one star and two stars respectively), why not take the argument to it's logical conclusion and just have a binary system – two stars for 'good' games and one star for 'bad' games? If you're going to have a rating code at all, it's got to be meaningful, and percentages are the most instantly-graspable and easy-to-relate-to one there is. (Well, that we can think of, anyway).

DO THE write THING

certain magazine reviewers keep commenting that a large box can often mean a duff game hiding underneath.
If companies were to produce smaller boxes (and consequently reduce the size of its artwork) they would save cash, money which could be better spent funding future products. I may be an exception, but I buy games because they receive rave reviews and not because the artwork looks pretty. If I had the choice of buying a naff game with great illustrations or an excellent title in a small blank box, I wouldn't hesitate to buy the latter. Hopefully your readers would do the same.

What are your views on this matter?
Yours faithfully,
Stuart N. Hardy, Sheffield.

We certainly know where you're coming from Stuart. The ludicrously huge boxes that much new software comes in can prove to be a complete pain in the backside (especially to magazines with limited office space!), and in many case seems totally pointless – most of them are 90 percent empty anyway! The problem – which ties in from Roger Bennett of ELSPA's arguments from a couple of issues back – is all to do with large size equals higher perceived value equals premium quality product equals more impact on the shelves and so on. Short of there being an industry standard established (a la records or CDs) for all games we can't see an end to it unfortunately.

Stuart N. Hardy fans will be pleased to hear there's more from him further down the column...

Dear AMIGA POWER,

The CDTV has been released and it is rightly getting a lot of publicity, but shouldn't a bit more emphasis be put on the forthcoming CD-I from Philips? From what I've heard and read it is going to wipe the floor with CDTV as it is technically superior with full motion video, more colours on screen etc, and has huge backers such as Nintendo and Sony. Won't you be better off telling people to wait a while longer as (if I'm correct) the opposition looks a lot stronger than Commodore's effort?
Yours,
MH, Washington

P.S. Your cover disk on issue 3 (*Exile* demo and PD games) was spot on, much better than the old free games. Keep the PD coming. I like your reviewing style too – all a game has to be is simple fun.

(It's very nice, but you don't have to pay us lots of compliments just to get your letters printed, everyone). As for CDTV and CD-I, MH, in our CDTV feature we did mention CD-I, but this is, remember, an Amiga games magazine. We cover CDTV because it's an Amiga-based product, CD-I isn't really anything to do with us. By all means wait and see how it turns out, but I doubt if you'll be hearing much about it in these pages.

Dear AMIGA POWER,

In the last five or six years, I have literally read several hundred letters, sent to an equal amount of magazines, on subjects ranging from the price of egg sandwiches on BR to the My Computer Is Better Than Your Computer debates. In all that time, this is only the second time that I have felt an overpowering urge to put pen to paper. In fact, even if this letter doesn't make it into print, at least it will have got it off my chest. So what am I rambling on about? The interview with ELSPA General Secretary Roger Bennett, that's what!

After reading the many letters mentioned above, I was of the opinion that piracy was the No. 1 culprit in helping to kill off full price software, regardless of machine. But not according to Mr. Bennett! It follows that FAST have been misleading us for the last couple of years!

Of course, ELSPA doesn't have a mandate to say who can or cannot have cover disks, but let's be honest about it Mr. Bennett, what would ELSPA do if AMIGA POWER or any other magazine ignored them and went ahead with putting complete games on covermounts? A discreet word in the appropriate advertiser's ear, perhaps? About maybe substantially reducing the amount of space bought each month? Shades of Al Capone...

Who the hell do ELSPA think they're kidding? I for one don't blame any magazine for not putting any more full games on covermounts as I doubt they could afford to lose as much money as they doubtless would if Mr. Bennett and his cronies had their way.

As for his comments on packaging – crap, total crap. As far as Mr. Bennett and his cohorts are concerned, the bigger the package the better, because us gullible customers (who already pay exorbitant and highly inflated prices) will think that the disk, if sold in a gigantic box, is worth the money they are charging. Why don't ELSPA's members put the disks in cornflakes packets? Then they could sell them for even more.

Mr. Bennett thinks that, quote, "Cutting back on covermounted games will actually be good news for the games player in the long run". How will that happen? Are ELSPA's members going to cut the price of games? Ha flaming ha.

Another good one here, quote, "covermounts are undermining the perceived value of what a game is". Roughly translated this means "How can we sell off our totally crap back catalogue if Joe Public can get better ones off a magazine cover?"

So there you have it. It was the covermounts that have been killing the industry all along, and not piracy as everyone thought! Maybe we can disband FAST now that the covermounts have stopped, and the industry can get on with selling us crap games in potato crisp boxes at £45 each. (Maybe they could throw in a magazine or two, free with every game?)
Thanks for taking the trouble to read this.
Bye,
Peter Leswell, Glenrothes.

Dear AMIGA POWER

So you don't want any praise? (*Well, we didn't say absolutely none... -Ed*) Well, I'll tell you how crap you are! Firstly the disk on issue three was rubbish. *Prehistorik* was miles too short and *Frantic Freddie* didn't work half the time. As for *Amoeba Invaders*, forget it. *Exile* was quite good and *Tiles* wasn't bad, but why not give away a decent full-price game like everyone else seems to be doing before it's too late?

Secondly I'm going to tell you how crap a couple of your reviewers are. I'll start with Mark Ramshaw (the one who looks like the singer from The Doors). How could he give *F-15 Strike Eagle II* 87 percent? I hate flight sims, they're all the same, don't you realise this? The only good one is *FA/18 Interceptor* because you can drive along the roads and shoot at the control tower and generally muck about. The other reviewer is Stuart Campbell – how can you have him as a reviewer if he's so crap at games? When he compared *Kick Off* to *Gary Lineker's Hot Shot* he said while playing *Kick Off* he couldn't manage free kicks, shooting, passing, tackling or even running and taking penalties. How crap is this man?

Despite the complaints you're the best mag about, along with Amiga Format.
Yours,
M. Moore, Norfolk

Mark and Stuart say – "Did you spill our pints, pal?"
First up, I hardly think it's fair to complain about Mark giving F-15 II *a high mark, on the grounds that you don't like flight sims in general. If you don't like 'em, don't buy 'em. Secondly, Stuart is a British and European gamesplaying champion, and he says he'll take you on anytime. Also, if you read the* Kick Off/Hot Shot *review properly, you'll find that it didn't say any such things. Running with the ball in* Kick Off *is impossible, and deliberately so, so it's not even slightly reasonable to accuse Stuart of being crap because he couldn't do it. And as for cover disks, don't you know that we're not allowed to give full games away any more?*

Dear Sir,

While reading your reply to my letter in issue five of AMIGA POWER, I wondered what prompted you to print the low remark about about me writing to different magazines. I have vast literate experience (with over 67 letters published since early January 1990) and in all that time this is the first complaint I have ever received.

Indeed, I have built up a strong relationship with most other magazines – just look in the recent editions of Amiga Computing and Amiga Shopper to see evidence of this.

Although you complained about my letters being the same to every mag, I noticed that you have printed all my previous letters in full. Thus my comments must have been worthy of publication, and I know for a fact that the other mags to which you refer feel the same way. Otherwise, NONE of my letters would have been included in any of their Reader's Pages.

You are quoted (issue five) as saying: "We're a different magazine, produced by a completely different set of people, and there's no reason whatsoever why we should have the same opinions as them."

Exactly. You have just answered your own question. Being individuals, we all have different opinions, and hence I send my letters to many magazines. Their responses, especially when I have asked for advice, are often very helpful. It has been proven time and again that many minds can reach satisfactory conclusions much better than just one.

It may interest you to know that my letters have won me both money and prizes in the past, especially with Amiga Shopper and Amiga Format. Furthermore, a quiz of mine was even adopted as an official competition in Commodore User several months ago, the prize being a total of £250 worth of computer software. I personally didn't ask for all this, nor was I trying to be 'Big', 'Hard' or 'Clever'. These magazines obviously thought my efforts were worth rewarding, and for this I am grateful.

I noticed you critisised the letter by Andrew Herbert in very much the same way as you did mine, using almost identical words. I hope these were just the flavour of the month and that this is just a silly phase you're going through. Did you not, after all, say in issue three of your magazine: "Have the courage of your convictions people – if you've something to say, don't be afraid to put your name on it."

And do you remember WHY you said this – because out of the next three letters mine was the only one to do so? I have included my name with EVERY letter I have ever written, but after your criticism , I (and no doubt Andrew Herbert), wonder what use this is if all you are going to do is take such a bad attitude towards us. How do you expect people to sign their letters if this is the type of treatment they will receive for doing do?
Yours angrily
Stuart Hardy,
Sheffield

We got another letter from Stuart's twin brother Paul saying much the same thing. To be honest, I'm not quite sure what the answer to this one is. I'm obviously concerned to have caused so much offence, but equally I'd think most people would find it fairly annoying to see the same letter printed in two or three different mags – we certainly found it annoying seeing your perfectly reasonable letter appear in ACE the same month we ran it. When you're on holiday you don't write the same postcard word for word to two different friends do you? Or if you did, they'd be a bit miffed if they found out, don't you think? (Still, at least we can fairly categorically say we've got an original, never-seen-before letter here from Stuart this time...)

And that's all we've got space for this ish, folks. Apart, of course, from this bit...

AND ANOTHER THING...

- Adrian Pannett of Shrewsbury suggests we run a regular page where we print reader's opinions of games old and new. Any takers?
- Don't believe the hype on *Lemmings*, *Toki* and *Gods* warns Fly from Tanworth-in-Arden – they're all crap.
- Put a helping hand column in Complete Control suggests Jamie Brinkhurst from Maresfield. Good idea, Jamie. In fact, consider it done from next issue!
- Review old games which are classics so that newcomers know about them is Dominic Miller from Balsham's idea. What? You mean on top of The Bottom Line?
- Put a box in reviews on whether One Meg is needed, if extra memory is used, and if extra drives are used to cut down swapping suggests Steven Allan of Edinburgh.
- Warn your readers about the National Repair Centre asks Rick Corbett, of Bristol – they took months to fix my computer, and then it came back just as broken as it was when I sent it!
- Do articles on games of a certain type – eg racing games – pointing out what are the good ones and what to avoid says J. Gunn of Harlow. We've thought about it, 'J', and you may see something similar in the near future.
- If YOU''VE got any point you really want to make, or have anything to say about any of the above, write to us at Do The Write Thing at the usual AP address.

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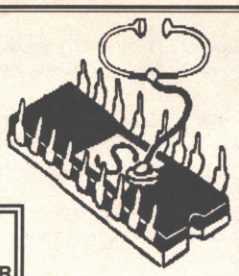

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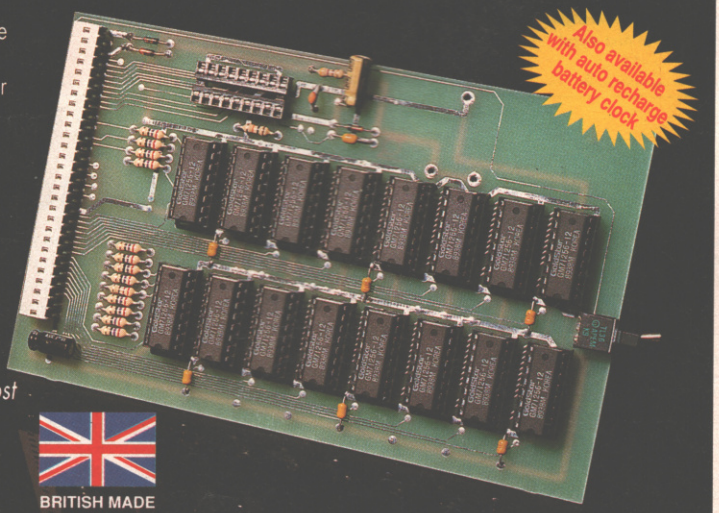

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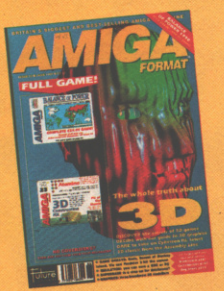

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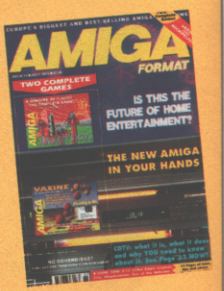

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PUBLIC DOMAIN
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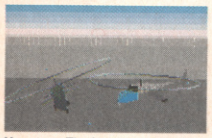
AFRIKA KORPS
Impressions £29.99

Uppers – Intelligent opponents set it apart from the standard wargame. ***Downers*** – But not enough to give it any flair. ***The Bottom Line*** – Just because it's a wargame, it doesn't mean it has to be this primitive. ★

AH37-M THUNDERHAWK
Core £30.99



Uppers – The fastest, slickest 3D graphics yet to grace the Amiga. ***Downers*** – The lack of real sim elements may put some off, and the mouse control is a bit unwieldy. ***The Bottom Line*** – A brilliantly executed arcade-simulation crossover, which captures the frenetic helicopter feel quite excellently. ★★★★★

ALPHA WAVES
Infogrames £25.99

Uppers – Nice 3D bouncing romp. Bizarre, but endearing. ***Downers*** – It tends to feel like an executive toy, and a very expensive one at that. ***The Bottom Line*** – A novel diversion but no great shakes. ★★

THE AMAZING SPIDERMAN
Empire £24.99

Uppers – Old fashioned platform gameplay still holds up well. ***Downers*** – Tiny sprites and – let's face it – it all looks rather crap when you first see it. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fun, but do you really want to fork out 25 quid for what's basically a crumbly old 8-bit game? ★★

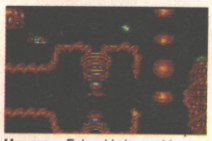
AMIGA ENCOUNTER
Novagen £20.42

Uppers – Very fast and atmospheric. ***Downers*** – It's just *Battlezone* yet again. Incredibly thin gameplay for a full-price 16-bitter. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good old-fashioned zooming' n' blasting fun, but it really should have been a budget game. ★★★

ARMOUR-GEDDON
Psygnosis £25.99

Uppers – Lots of tanks, lots of planes, lots of places to go. It's deep and wide and tall (and good-looking to boot). ***Downers*** – Takes a lot of self-discipline to play properly. ***The Bottom Line*** – A natural successor to *Carrier Command*, and – it has to be said – a worthy one too.★★★★

ARMALYTE
Thalamus £25.99



Uppers – Enjoyable in an old-fashioned sort of way. ***Downers*** – Sloppily presentation and inadequate design. ***The Bottom Line*** – Totally eclipsed by Activision's *R-Type II*. ★★

ARNHEM
CCS £19.95

Uppers – A 8-bit classic wargame finally brought to Amiga owners. ***Downers*** – ...but nobody really wanted it anyway. ***The Bottom Line*** – Primitive beyond belief – even wargamers should give it a wide berth. ★

A-10 TANK KILLER
Dynamix (Sierra) £35.75

Uppers – A wealth of typical flight sim-style detail, and a genuine feeling of taking part in a major conflict. ***Downers*** – Gameplay suffers due to the sluggish frame rate and lack of a real flying 'feel'. ***The Bottom Line*** – A interesting but flawed attempt at taking the flight simulation genre a stage further. ★★★

ATF II
Digital Integration £24.99

Uppers – Good old-fashioned 3D fly-and-shoot game. ***Downers*** – It's no flight sim, and it's not a fully-fledged arcade blast either. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fun as far as it goes. ★★

ATOMIC ROBOKID
Activision £24.99

Uppers – Plenty of levels, plenty of action. ***Downers*** – Not particularly fast (and certainly not new!) ***The Bottom Line*** – Reasonable straightforward shoot-'em-up in the 'son of *R-Type*' vein. ★★

ATOMINO
Psygnosis £25.99

Uppers – Easy to pick up, with thousands of levels to keep you going. ***Downers*** – Can covalent bonding be fun? We're not sure. Rather samey; very tough; crap music. ***The Bottom Line*** – Slightly similar to *Pipe Mania* in some ways – if you liked that, try this. ★★★

BACK TO THE FUTURE PART III
Image Works £24.99

Uppers – Variety, neat animation, some decent jokes. ***Downers*** – But film licences nearly always feel too thin to be worth 25 quid... ***The Bottom Line*** – ...and this one's no different. Fun but slight. ★★★

BADLANDS
Tengen (Domark) £19.99

Uppers – A close conversion... ***Downers*** – ...of a crap overhead-view arcade race game. ***The Bottom Line*** – So workmanlike its jeans hang over its arse. ★★

THE BALL GAME
Electronic Zoo £25.99

Uppers – Based on the excellent but un-released *Infection* puzzle game. ***Downers*** – The concept is spoiled by senseless changes to the rules. ***The Bottom Line*** – Interesting, but ineptly executed. ★★

THE BARD'S TALE III – THIEF OF FATE
Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – A satisfying bout of monster bashing to appeal to the usual *Bard's Tale* mob. ***Downers*** – New ideas and fancy programming are sadly lacking. ***The Bottom Line*** – Monumentally unspectacular, but kinda nice all the same. One for the hardened D&D freak. ★★★

B.A.T.
Ubi Soft £29.99

Uppers – Intergalactic intrigue in a novel interactive comic book style. ***Downers*** – Perhaps a little too left-of-centre for some. ***The Bottom Line*** – Very different, and actually very good. ★★★

BATTLE CHESS II – CHINESE CHESS
Electronic Arts £25.99

Uppers – Cute graphics, and a new angle on the chess theme. ***Downers*** – The animations soon become tiresome, and Chinese chess isn't half as interesting as the standard game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good as a showpiece, but a failure as a piece of playable software. ★★

BATTLE COMMAND
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Loads of missions, atmospheric solid 3D graphics (ie lots of green), plus a good mix of strategy and blasting. ***Downers*** – Takes a while to get into; some odd (and impossible to complete) missions. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you've got the self-discipline to persevere past an uninspiring start, this is a worthy follow-up to the classic *Carrier Command*. ★★★

BATTLEMASTER
PSS £29.99

Uppers – A tired fantasy/strategy plot given new lease of life by excellent graphics and oodles of playability. ***Downers*** – Arcade junkies need not apply, despite the abundance of genocidal mayhem. ***The Bottom Line*** – Try it – you may be surprised. ★★★

BEAST BUSTERS
Activision £25.99

Uppers – Graphically close to the original. ***Downers*** – Slows down when there's a lot happening, and it's far too easy. ***The Bottom Line*** – Doesn't compare too well with all the other *Op Wolf* games on the Amiga. ★★

BETRAYAL
Rainbird £29.99

Uppers – Fantasy blended with strategy and some nice graphical touches offers an intriguing hybrid. ***Downers*** – The game really needs several human players to make it exciting. ***The Bottom Line*** – Once again Rainbird attempt something a little bit different. ★★★

BILL & TED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE
Capstone (Accolade) £24.99

Uppers – In our humble opinion, a most excellent subject for a licence. The game even manages to capture some of the flavour of the bodacious film too. ***Downers*** – But that doesn't stop it being a strong contender for the 'Weakest Gameplay In The World' award. ***The Bottom Line*** – Something of a missed opportunity. Let's hope for better things if they make a game of the film sequel... ★★

BILLIARDS II SIMULATOR
Infogrames £25.99

Uppers – Plenty of variations, including a 'crazy pool' with an octagonal table. ***Downers*** – Neither the 2D or 3D modes allow a decent shot to be made, and the 'feel' of the sport is lost completely. ***The Bottom Line*** – Another game which crumbles in the face of its competition, this time in the form of *Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker*. ★★

BLADE WARRIOR
Image Works £25.99

Uppers – Pretty breathtaking graphics, with plenty of action and puzzling too. ***Downers*** – The gameplay is unlikely to be to everyone's taste. ***The Bottom Line*** – Possibly the most atmospheric game ever. ★★★★

BLUE MAX
Mindscape £34.99

Uppers – Less techie than most flying thangs. Some rather spiffing sound compliments the WWI feel nicely. ***Downers*** – Not a winner in the user-friendliness stakes, and the slow and sloppy main game never (ahem) really takes off. ***The Bottom Line*** – Dull. *Not* the definitive bi-plane game for Biggles buffs it should have been. ★

BOTICS
Krisalis £19.99

Uppers – Nice sound; futuristic graphics. ***Downers*** – Absolutely dire *Pong*-style gameplay. ***The Bottom Line*** – Get out of here! ★

BRAT
Image Works £24.99

Uppers – Very pretty, very smooth, very challenging. ***Downers*** – ...and very, very irritating indeed, especially if you hate the central character. ***The Bottom Line*** – Okay if you play it with the sound off. ★★★

BREACH 2
Impressions £24.99

Uppers – Stick with it and you'll find an immensely rewarding space/strategy blast with loads of levels. ***Downers*** – Scrappy graphics and some awkward quirks will deter many. ***The Bottom Line*** – Loved *Laser Squad*? Then you'll probably take a shine to *Breach 2*. ★★

BRIGADE COMMANDER
Electronic Zoo £25.99

Uppers – Desert Storm scenarios give it a nice touch of topicality. ***Downers*** – The usual crap graphics. ***The Bottom Line*** – Friendlier than the average wargame, and more playable too. ★★★

CADAVER
Image Works £24.99

Uppers – Gorgeously atmospheric graphics; a good mix of puzzling and hacking.

You need never buy another piece of duff software again! Why not? Well, because you've got The Bottom Line, of course – AMIGA POWER's unique guide to the past year's games. Constantly updated, with new games added and old ones chucked out every month, it lists every important release from the last twelve months, with points for (or 'Uppers'), points against ('Downers') and the all important Bottom Line. This month our new entries range from the excellent (*Mega lo Mania*) through the surprisingly good (*The Simpsons*) to the disappointing (*Nebulus 2*) and the hopelessly crap (*Living Jigsaws, Striker Manager*, take your pick). Incredible, but true.

THE BOTTOM LINE

RATINGS: ★★★★★ Excellent ★★★★★ Nearly there ★★★★ Very good ★★★ Has its moments ★★ Flawed ★ Dire

Downers – One or two irritating moments and it's all a bit lacking in the excitement department. ***The Bottom Line*** – A nice blend of 3D graphics and adventuring (but it's not a classic). ★★★

CADAVER – THE PAYOFF

Renegade £16.99

Uppers – A wonderful add-on for fans of the first *Cadaver*. ***Downers*** – Not a lot of use for anyone else though. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you've got the original, this isn't such a bad price to pay for more of the same. ★★★

THE CARDINAL OF THE KREMLIN

Accolade £24.99

Uppers – Reasonably captivating and accessible strategy. ***Downers*** – Ridiculous arcade sequence dropped slap bang in the middle of the game almost totally destroys the atmosphere. ***The Bottom Line*** – Alarmingly stupid design blows what could have been a winner. ★★

CARTHAGE

Psygnosis £24.99

Uppers – Excellent graphics and some nifty arcade sequences from the masters of slick programming. ***Downers*** – But underneath it's a distinctly average strategy game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Despite appearances, not one for the joystick junkies out there. ★★★

CENTURION

Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – Fairly interesting management sections with some nifty battle sequences. ***Downers*** – Two appalling arcade sections blow its chances. ***The Bottom Line*** – Un-balanced. ★★

CHALLENGE GOLF

On-Line £24.99

Uppers – Easy to get into, and up to four players catered for. ***Downers*** – Mind-numbingly unrealistic putting sequence, and loads of unnecessary little bugs. ***The Bottom Line*** – Lack of playability makes this a seriously below-par golf sim. Go for PGA Tour Golf instead. ★

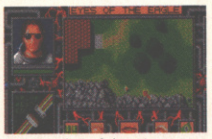
CHAMPION OF THE RAJ

Image Works £25.99

Uppers – Arcade sequences break up the heavy-duty strategy action. ***Downers*** – Even more ridiculous disk accessing than usual in this type of thing. Crap programming generally. ***The Bottom Line*** – Potentially good game ruined by complete lack of playability. ★

CHAOS IN ANDROMEDA

On-Line £24.99



Uppers – Lots of character interaction and plenty to do. ***Downers*** – Crap fight sequences and tiny graphics. ***The Bottom Line*** – Enjoyable Ultima-style adventure slightly spoiled by sloppy programming. Still good fun though. ★★★

CHAOS STRIKES BACK

Mirrorsoft £24.99

Uppers – Complex and ingenious puzzles; very user friendly; great sound. ***Downers*** – Slightly old fashioned looking. ***The Bottom Line*** – Engrossing role playing adventure using the *Dungeon Master* game system. ★★★★

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

Impressions £29.99

Uppers – Visually impressive wargame, with instant appeal and plenty of user-friendly presentation. ***Downers*** – Things fall down in the wargaming aspect of things, with some rather silly rules. ***The Bottom Line*** – A very brave try, but it doesn't quite reach the heights to which it aspires. ★★★

CHASE HQ II

Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Well, it's not as disastrous as the first conversion. ***Downers*** – But still terminally average. It drives like a brick. A brick underwater in fact. With lead weights. ***The Bottom Line*** – It looks as tired as Miami Vice. ★★

CHUCK ROCK

Core Design £24.99

Uppers – A first class caveman romp, with some innovation in the gameplay for once. ***Downers*** – A touch shallow and a touch easy. ***The Bottom Line*** – Pretty brilliant platformer, one of the Amiga's very best. ★★★★

CHUCK YEAGER'S ADVANCED FLIGHT TRAINER 2.0

Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – A veritable air force of planes to fly, with piles of options, missions and the obligatory load of external views. There's even the opportunity to fly the Space Shuttle. ***Downers*** – A complete lack of speed, bad disk access and naff perspective put the dampers on the whole affair. ***The Bottom Line*** – Low flying flight sim – fails to stay with the competition. ★★★

CHIP'S CHALLENGE

US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Lots and lots of levels; typically well thought out console-style gameplay. ***Downers*** – Simplistic graphics; lack of depth. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good, but not the most characterful of puzzle games, and not the cheapest either. ★★★

COHORT

Impressions £29.99

Uppers – (Relatively) excellent graphics and helpful user-interface make things accessible. ***Downers*** – The game is not without flaws, and the controls system isn't as good as it should be. ***The Bottom Line*** – A fine off-beat wargame, but overpriced. ★★

THE COLONEL'S BEQUEST

Sierra £34.99

Uppers – Mildly intriguing whodunit, with that ever so familiar Sierra style of presentation. ***Downers*** – Terrible graphics, hours of tedium. ***The Bottom Line*** – Overpriced and over here. Sierra can do much better than this.★★

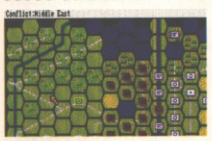
COMMANDO

Elite £19.99

Uppers – Lovingly recreated coin-op blast-'em scroller. The game that launched a thousand scrolling war blasters (Mercs, Warzone *et al*). ***Downers*** – As fashionable as an anorak. ***The Bottom Line*** – Classic stuff, but not a good indication of the Amiga's capabilities. ★★★

CONFLICT MIDDLE EAST

SSI/US Gold £30.99



Uppers – A wargame in the traditional sense, but executed very well indeed. ***Downers*** – The wargame label is no longer a valid excuse for a program looking so dated. ***The Bottom Line*** – Of limited interest, even to hardened wargamers. ★★★

COUGAR FORCE

Tomahawk £19.99

Uppers – The box is quite interesting (actually that's a bit of a lie). ***Downers*** – Everything. The sound, the graphics, the gameplay – all dire in the extreme. ***The Bottom Line*** – A perfect present for pyromaniacs. ★

CRIME WAVE

US Gold £24.95

Uppers – Gore galore; the numerous video interludes spice it up a bit. ***Downers*** – The actual game is dull in the extreme, and the waiting between levels is monstrous. ***The Bottom Line*** – A bog-standard blast-'em-up with knobs on. ★

CYBERCON III

US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Brilliant sense of 'being there', and better Freescape than Freescape. ***Downers*** – Predictably, not all that accessible to your average game player. ***The Bottom Line*** – Well worth the effort of getting into. ★★★★★

DAS BOOT

Mindscape £29.99

Uppers – The most accessible sub sim to date. ***Downers*** – ...but that still doesn't make it particularly accessible. ***The Bottom Line*** – Playable, but overpriced. The best in its field. ★★★

DEATH TRAP

Anco £24.99

Uppers – Unusual mix of horizontally-scrolling arcade adventure and magic. ***Downers*** – Naff scrolling and poor sound mar the atmosphere. ***The Bottom Line*** – A refreshingly playable game. ★★

DEFENDER II

ARC £24.99

Uppers – *Defender, Defender II* and *Stargate* all in one package. ***Downers*** – Only purists will appreciate the archaic graphics, one or two essential features are omitted, and the *Defender II* game is duff. ***The Bottom Line*** – Every home should have one. ★★★★

DEUTEROS

Activision £25.99

Uppers – An incredibly huge and absorbing game, with challenges that seem perfectly paced to be in tune with the developing game-skills of the average player. ***Downers*** – Visually it can be a bit of a yawn. ***The Bottom Line*** – Don't be fooled by the strategy exterior – this is a game that everyone should try. ★★★★★

DISC

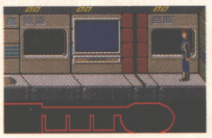
Loriciel £24.99

Uppers – A few nice graphical touches. ***Downers*** – Appallingly-designed gameplay with very little actual action. ***The Bottom Line*** – A crappy *Discs Of Tron* rip-off without most of the original's good features. ★

DISCOVERY

Micro Illusions £25.99

Uppers – Good graphics for an educational game. ***Downers*** – For a game which relies heavily on speech synthesis, the speech quality is terrible. ***The Bottom Line*** – Tricky to play and educationally dubious, this is a bit of a flop. ★★



DRAGON BREED

Activision £24.99

Uppers – A near perfect arcade conversion; niftily animated main dragon sprite. ***Downers*** – The zillionth sideways scrolling shoot-'em-up of last year. ***The Bottom Line*** – One instinctively knows when a conversion is right. ★★★★

DRAGONS OF FLAME

SSI (US Gold) £24.99

Uppers – Almost instant playability – not something you'd expect from a role playing game. ***Downers*** – A bit simplistic for real Dungeons & Dragons fans. ***The Bottom Line*** – An excellent introduction to the new bread of fantasy RPGs. ★★★

DRAGON'S LAIR II

Readysoft £44.95

Uppers – Really incredibly gorgeous cartoon graphics. ***Downers*** – Minimal player interaction and a ridiculous price tag. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not the best value game in the world. ★★

ECO PHANTOMS

Electronic Zoo £25.99

Uppers – A nice line in H.G.Wells sci-fi theatrics and some unusual sub-sections give *Eco Phantoms* a highly original flavour. ***Downers*** – The parts don't actually add up to very much, and the copy protection system could induce bouts of violence. ***The Bottom Line*** – A reasonable 3D routine masquerading as a game. ★

EDD THE DUCK

Impulze £24.99

Uppers – *Rainbow Islands*-inspired gameplay ensures some level of interest. ***Downers*** – But the whole thing just doesn't inspire, and the difficulty is placed too high for a young audience. ***The Bottom Line*** – Your granny might buy you one. ★★

ELF

Ocean £25.39

Uppers – An excellent arcade adventure romp, with enough interesting little extras to make it fresh. ***Downers*** – These things are getting just a little bit old-fashioned, aren't they? ***The Bottom Line*** – A good solid game from the Ocean stable, but not a world beater. ★★★★

ELVIRA – MISTRESS OF THE DARK

Accolade £24.99

Uppers – Elvira's gorgeous; the graphics really draw the player in. ***Downers*** – Pity the game itself is nigh on impossible – and it takes five disks! ***The Bottom Line*** – Falls apart due to disk swapping and infuriating gameplay. ★★

EMLYN HUGHES' ARCADE QUIZ

Audiogenic £24.99

Uppers – Just like a pub quiz machine... ***Downers*** – ...but with Emlyn Hughes in it (and no real cash prizes). ***The Bottom Line*** – Oh dear. ★

ESWAT

US Gold £24.99

Uppers – As conversions go, it's not a complete nightmare... ***Downers*** – ...but let's be honest, the arcade original was duff, duff, duff. ***The Bottom Line*** – A reasonable conversion of a terminally average game. ★

EUROPEAN SUPERLEAGUE

CDS £24.99

Uppers – A surprisingly involving footy strategy thing in the *Football Manager* vein. ***Downers*** – They're not still making these things are they? ***The Bottom Line*** – A dated idea – it sounds tedious but it's actually executed quite commendably. ★★

EXILE

Audiogenic £24.99

Uppers – Real-world physics incorporated into an arcade game; it's more of a true arcade adventure than most games bearing that tag. ***Downers*** – Rather primitive graphics, and not the most instantly playable game ever. ***The Bottom Line*** – A great arcade adventure, but it might not be your cup of tea if you're an action fan. ★★★★★

EXTERMINATOR

Audiogenic £24.99

Uppers – Very original (read 'very, very odd indeed') arcade thing, well converted to retain the original's feel. ***Downers*** – Confusing initially, but once you've played it for a while it's...confusing. ***The Bottom Line*** – Great fun, but it doesn't really make it in the longevity stakes. ★★★

THE EXECUTIONER

Hawk £25.99

Uppers – A playable enough *Thrust*-variant, with one or two extra bits tacked on (such as the tasteful torture scenes). ***Downers*** – The core of the game just isn't exciting or different enough to give *The Executioner* that 'one more go' appeal. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fine if you don't mind the slightly repetitive gameplay, and significant lack of action. ★★

EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

SSI (US Gold) £29.99

Uppers – Takes *Dungeon Master* a step further. Excellent atmosphere and graphics. ***Downers*** – Despite

being better than *DM*, it's not actually very different from it at all.

The Bottom Line – The best D&D game yet for the Amiga. (Or, indeed, for anything else.) ★★★★★

F-15 STRIKE EAGLE II

MicroProse £34.99

Uppers – Graphics to make you gasp, sound effects to get your adrenalin pumping and gameplay to leave you in a quivering heap on the floor. ***Downers*** – Despite the shoot-'em-up nature of things, it can all be a touch too much for the less ambitious games player. ***The Bottom Line*** – Quite possibly the last word in flight sims (so far, anyway). ★★★★★

FIGHTING SOCCER

Activision £24.99

Uppers – The coin-op was mildly amusing(ish). ***Downers*** – You are accused of producing an utterly dull game of the lowest calibre. How do you plead? ***The Bottom Line*** – Guilty as hell. ★

THE FOOL'S ERRAND

Miles Computing £24.95

Uppers – A puzzle game with real lastability – 80 problems to get your brain aching. ***Downers*** – Underneath the gloss, a fairly average game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Just okay. ★★

FRENETIC

Core Design £20.99

Uppers – Fast and good-looking. ***Downers*** – You've seen this all before, and done rather more excitingly into the bargain. ***The Bottom Line*** – Slick programming only serves to make Frenetic tedious in a professional kind of a way. ★★

GALAXY FORCE II

Activision £24.99

Uppers – An ambitious attempt at a visually stunning coin-op. ***Downers*** – Everything else. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you know you can't do it why bother trying? ★

GARFIELD – THE WINTER'S TAIL

The Edge £24.99

Uppers – Brilliant Jim Davis graphics. ***Downers*** – Crappy Steve Davis gameplay. ***The Bottom Line*** – What a wasted licence. For die-hard fans only. ★

GAUNTLET III

US Gold £25.99

Uppers – A new angle on the arcade classic gives some novelty value, and makes proceedings sufficiently different this time around. ***Downers*** – The pace is ponderous, there aren't enough baddies, and the speech is badly missed. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fine, but it doesn't really live up to the legend that is *Gauntlet*. ★★★

GAZZA II

Empire £24.99

Uppers – Gazza doesn't actually appear in the game much. ***Downers*** – Juddering sprites, poor control (just like the man himself), terrible sound – take your pick. ***The Bottom Line*** – It's enough to reduce you to tears. ★

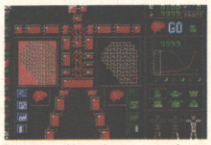
GEM'X

Demonware £24.99

Uppers – Gorgeous graphics, exquisite sound, beautifully simple mental torture. ***Downers*** – Won't change your mind if you're not into puzzlers. ***The Bottom Line*** – One of the best puzzle games to date.★★★★

GERM CRAZY

Electronic Zoo £25.99



Uppers – Not quite as expensive as Mindscape's *Life & Death*. ***Downers*** – But with little else in its favour. ***The Bottom Line*** – Another half-baked idea, not followed through properly. (Where do they all come from?) ★

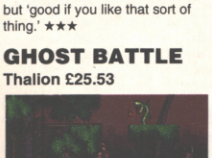
GHENGHIS KHAN

Infogrames £39.99

Uppers – Stylish and fairly deep historical strategy game. ***Downers*** – Ridiculously expensive though, and requires a fair dose of manual reading. ***The Bottom Line*** – A bit of a cliché, but 'good if you like that sort of thing.' ★★★

GHOST BATTLE

Thalion £25.53



Uppers – The sound's quite good and the graphics are okay. ***Downers*** – Everything else is utterly awful. ***The Bottom Line*** – Badly-designed and executed Ghosts'n'Goblins clone that's so bad it's scary. ★

GODS

Renegade £25.53

Uppers – Lovely aesthetics, quite involved for a platform game. ***Downers*** – Not quite as good as it's made out to be. ***The Bottom Line*** – Don't believe the hype, but pretty damn good all the same. ★★★★★

GOLDEN AXE

Virgin £24.99

Uppers – Perfect arcade conversion, with every last feature implemented. ***Downers*** – There never really was a lot of variation in the gameplay. ***The Bottom Line*** – Visually stunning, but not different enough to separate it from the usual beat-'em-up. ★★★

GRAND PRIX MASTER

Dinamic £19.95

Uppers – Endorsed by Jorge Martinez (apparently famous on the 80cc motorcycle circuit). ***Downers*** – Handles like a Reliant Robin. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not to put too fine a point on it, useless. ★

GREMLINS II

Elite £24.99

Uppers – Cute as hell, with graphics and sound nigh on perfect. ***Downers*** – It really is far too difficult. ***The Bottom Line*** – A good film licence. ★★★

GUNBOAT

Uppers £29.99

Uppers – A sim which actually does something different. ***Downers*** – The action doesn't really convey enough excitement, and the graphics are a little on the primitive side. ***Bottom Line*** – A highly complex sim, this takes quite some time to get drawn into. ★★★

HALLS OF MONTEZUMA

Electronic Arts £25.99

Uppers – Almost unlimited lastability, thanks to the huge numbers of scenarios and variables. ***Downers*** – Off-puttingly complicated, and offers nothing new to the unconverted. ***Bottom Line*** – Well put together, but still strictly for diehards. ★★

HAMMERFIST

Vivid Image (Activision) £24.99

Uppers – Graphically adept arcade adventure with tons of playability and plenty to keep you going. ***Downers*** – Iffy sound. ***The Bottom Line*** – Thoroughly enjoyable (if you like that sort of thing). ★★★

HARD DRIVIN' II

Tengen (Domark) £24.99

Uppers – Refined version of the original – less bugs, a track editor, a neat 'head-to-head' option if you link two machines... ***Downers*** – ...but still glitchy and not a patch on the arcade machine. ***The Bottom Line*** – Souped up, but not souped up enough. ★★

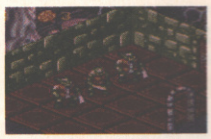
HEART OF THE DRAGON

Avatar Computing £25.99

Uppers – Lots of colours, and an (almost serious) attempt to do something new with the fantasy beat-'em-up. ***Downers*** – Beyond the almost impressive technical trickery lies not very much at all really. ***The Bottom Line*** – If your friend has bought it, give it a go. Then laugh very heartily at him. Entertaining in an embarrassing sort of way. ★

HERO QUEST

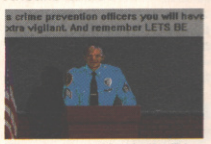
Gremlin £25.99



Uppers – Easy to get into, and deceptively addictive. You don't think you've been playing it for long, but suddenly it's Thursday and you're a week late for dinner. ***Downers*** – Not so good as a one-player game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Perhaps surprisingly, a highly entertaining game, and absolutely ideal when you've got game-playing friends round. ★★★★

HILL STREET BLUES

Krisalis £24.99



Uppers – A good feel for the TV series; characters (both player and others) that you can identify with. It's certainly an interesting way to handle a licence. ***Downers*** – Gets repetitive pretty quickly, and it's not the slickest game around. ***The Bottom Line*** – A good next-step for someone who's played *Sim City* to death and fancies a new challenge. Limited appeal, though. ★★★

HORROR ZOMBIES FROM THE CRYPT

Millennium £24.99

Uppers – Unusual idea; suitably spooky graphics. ***Downers*** – But let down by the dull platform nature of the game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Funny to watch, but fairly average to play. ★★

HUNTER

Activision £25.99

Uppers – Stunning 3D graphics and loads to do. ***Downers*** – The odd little graphical glitch or two. ***Bottom Line*** – Enormously absorbing game – you'll find yourself completely captivated by it for hours on end. ★★★★★

HYDRA

Domark £24.99

Uppers – Um, nice moving-water effect. ***Downers*** – Terrible control feel; duff, unclear graphics; feeble gameplay. ***The Bottom Line*** – An almost-competent conversion of a useless game. ★

INDIANA JONES ADVENTURE

US Gold £19.99

Uppers – More fine-tuning gives *Indy* the friendliest control system yet. It's pretty faithful to the movie too! Downers – Waiting for Indy to trek across the screen all the time can get annoying and some of the puzzles are just a wee bit too abstract. The Bottom Line – One of the best Amiga adventures available. ★★★★

INDIANAPOLIS 500

Electronic Arts £24.95

Uppers – An immensely playable blend of true racing sim and quick track blast, with a nice line in remote camera views (if you've got a 1 meg machine). ***Downers*** – Track repetition hinders lasting appeal. ***The Bottom Line*** – Just fabulous. ★★★★★

INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP ATHLETICS

Hawk £25.99

Uppers – Tons of fun for those who miss the days of joystick waggling. ***Downers*** – Terrible presentation, and a highly questionable price. ***The Bottom Line*** – If only it had been a tenner cheaper... ★★★

INTERNATIONAL SOCCER CHALLENGE

MicroProse £24.99

Uppers – Soccer in 3D? A very brave attempt to do something new with a tired old game-style... ***Downers*** – ...which unfortunately falls flat on its face. ***The Bottom Line*** – Foul. ★

I PLAY 3D SOCCER

Simulmondo £25.99

Uppers – The most dynamic and visually convincing representation of the sport yet. ***Downers*** – The realism is so high that you hardly ever get to kick the ball, and the 3D display system can be downright confusing. ***The Bottom Line*** – Brave, but ultimately flawed. ★★

IRON LORD

Ubi Soft £24.99

Uppers – Cinemaware-style medieval epic with plenty of sub-games and atmospheric presentation. ***Downers*** – It's just too tough for most, and with little real depth. ***The Bottom Line*** – Ultimately repetitive, but fun for a while. ★★

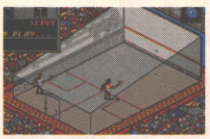
ISHIDO

Accolade £24.99

Uppers – Take *Othello*, add some *Go*, then throw in a few herbs and spices and heat until brown. The result is one piping hot Chinese board game called *Ishido*. ***Downers*** – Irritating dialogue boxes, and the luck element can infuriate. ***The Bottom Line*** – An engaging piece of Chinese culture, which should really be played with a good strong cup of tea. ★★

JAHANGIR KHAN'S CHAMPIONSHIP SQUASH

Krisalis £25.53



Uppers – Easy to play, closely adheres to the rules of the real thing, and there's plenty of options on offer. ***Downers*** – There's not really a lot you can do with a squash game, is there? ***The Bottom Line*** – The best squash game around for the Amiga. (Not that there's much in the way of competition). ★★★

JAMES POND

Millennium £24.99

Uppers – It's slicker than a pot of Brylcreem, with beautifully simple gameplay to instantly hook the unsuspecting player. ***Downers*** – Lacks any real adrenalin-pumping qualities. ***The Bottom Line*** – Loads of initial cute appeal, but really a pretty run-of-the-mill arcade runabout. ★★★

JIMMY WHITE'S WHIRLWIND SNOOKER

Virgin £24.99

Uppers – Stunning 3D camera-style view on the action, and the actual rules and physical mechanics of the game are re-created beautifully. ***Downers*** – Well, it's still only snooker. Some extra stats would have been nice too. ***Bottom Line*** – A veritable corker. A classic. A 90 percenter. Need we say more? ★★★★★

JUDGE DREDD

Virgin £24.99

Uppers – Two ancient sub-games offer a real rave from the grave. ***Downers*** – Another *Judge Dredd* game screwed up totally. No humour, no graphics, no game. ***The Bottom Line*** – One day somebody will do justice (ahem) to the legend of Dredd. One day. ★

JUPITER'S MASTERDRIVE

Ubi Soft £24.99

Uppers – Surprisingly playable race game. More fun than a packet of Jammy Dodgers. ***Downers*** – Unspectacular and

overpriced. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not sure why, but it really is jolly good fun. ★★

KEEF THE THIEF
Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – Excellent hack, slash and puzzle solving with some superb stylised graphics. ***Downers*** – It still plays like your average role-playing adventure. ***The Bottom Line*** – Respectable Tolkien-esque fare. ★★★

THE KILLING CLOUD
Image Works £24.99

Uppers – Fast-moving and pretty graphics, bags of depth, and a great creation of atmosphere. ***Downers*** – Riddled with inconsistencies and badly-executed ideas. ***The Bottom Line*** – Could have been a contender, but badly lets itself down in the logic stakes.★★★

THE KILLING GAME SHOW
Psygnosis £24.99

Uppers – Straightforward fun game sharing some aspects of gameplay with *Rainbow Islands*. The interactive replay feature is interesting, innovative, and useful. ***Downers*** – The usual Psygnosis metallic graphics don't really suit; it gets a bit too complicated for its own good later on, detracting from the simplicity that initially makes it so addictive. ***The Bottom Line*** – Despite unusually poor graphics, this is one of Psygnosis' best and most playable games to date. ★★★

LAST NINJA 2
System 3 £24.99

Uppers – Excellent 3D isometric graphics and a genuine attempt to inject some strategy into the martial arts genre. ***Downers*** – The game just isn't cohesive, and it plays like a pig. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not really in the Bruce Lee league (barely scraping Jackie Chan level to be honest). ★★

LANCASTER
Actual Screenshots £24.95

Uppers – Fairly impressive 3D polygon graphics. ***Downers*** – Lack of variation and any real excitement means it barely gets off the ground. ***The Bottom Line*** – Elevates averageness to an art form. ★★

LEISURE SUIT LARRY III
Sierra £34.99

Uppers – Ridiculous, over-sexed plot. Adventuring for consenting adults. ***Downers*** – Slightly obtrusive command parser, and as usual it's over-priced. ***The Bottom Line*** – Check it out – but only if you are over eighteen. ★★★

LEMMINGS
Psygnosis £24.99

Uppers – Utterly bizarre, pleasingly original and totally addictive. Invents a totally new category – the save-'em-up. ***Downers*** – As is the norm with such strikingly original concepts, some may wonder just what all the fuss is about. ***The Bottom Line*** – Love it or loathe it, you can't ignore it. *Lemmings* rule. ★★★★★

LIFE AND DEATH
Mindscape £25.53

Uppers – Excellent packaging (the surgical mask and gloves are wild), and some fairly amusing gameplay keeps things on the boil for a couple of hours. ***Downers*** – Repetition soon sets in – as a long-term challenge it all falls apart quite alarmingly. ***The Bottom Line*** – What's there is quite good, but there's just not enough of it. ★★

LINE OF FIRE
US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Imagine all the Rambo films back-to-back on fast-forward, and you have a good idea how much violence this game contains. ***Downers*** – You also have a pretty good idea of how intelligent it is. ***The Bottom Line*** – An impossible arcade conversion proves totally and utterly impossible. ★★

LIVING JIGSAWS
Miles Computing £24.99

Uppers – Likely to appeal to the younger Amiga users. ***Downers*** – Unlikely to appeal to anybody else, anywhere. ***The Bottom Line*** – Lacks any charm whatsoever. Quite silly and pointless all round, really. ★

LOGICAL
Rainbow Arts £19.99

Uppers – The ease of play makes this a nicely accessible puzzler. ***Downers*** – But the amount of time each move takes also makes it a seriously tedious one. ***The Bottom Line*** – In a crowded world of puzzle games, Logical is very blunt in the mustard area. ★★
tally successful. ★★★

LORDS OF CHAOS
Blade £24.99

Uppers – Great control system, comprehensive and logical. Lots of levels equal great lastability. ***Downers*** – Very little action; not much compulsion to reach your rather abstract goal. ***The Bottom Line*** – A disappointing game from Julian Gollop, not up to his usual standard. Wait for *Laser Squad 2*. ★★★

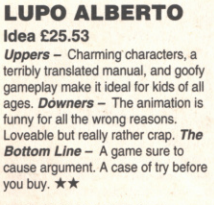
LOTUS ESPRIT TURBO CHALLENGE
Gremlin £24.99

Uppers – A wealth of control options lets you make the game more arcadey or simulationy according to preference. Bags of 'feel'. ***Downers*** – The other cars are a bit flat-looking, and half the screen is wasted in one-player mode. (You don't appear to be able to turn the annoying music off either). ***The Bottom Line*** – An extremely good driving game, even more fun with two players. ★★★★

LUPO ALBERTO
Idea £25.53

Uppers – Charming characters, a terribly translated manual, and goofy gameplay make it ideal for kids of all ages. ***Downers*** – The animation is funny for all the wrong reasons. Loveable but really rather crap. ***The Bottom Line*** – A game sure to cause argument. A case of try before you buy. ★★

MANCHESTER UNITED EUROPE
Krisalis £25.99



Uppers – Fast, pretty, and hugely playable. ***Downers*** – The strategy section is largely superficial (and what there is is optional). ***Bottom Line*** – Great control makes this just about the best football sim so far. ★★★★

MANIX
Millennium £24.99

Uppers – Charmingly surreal. ***Downers*** – But it's just an updated *Q-Bert* really, isn't it? ***The Bottom Line*** – Never really gets its hooks into you. ★★

MASTERBLAZER
Rainbow Arts £24.99

Uppers – Excellent two player mode, fast 3D action – all in all a respectable updating of the original future-sport game. ***Downers*** – Despite the new features, *Masterblazer* looks and feels dated. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fun for a few hours, but too simplistic to hold any lasting appeal. ★★★

MAUPITI ISLAND
Lankhor £25.99

Uppers – Pleasantly different, with loads of character interaction. ***Downers*** – Just too small to really justify the price. ***Bottom Line*** – Charming and interesting, but there just isn't enough of it. ★★★

MEAN STREETS
US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Many different styles combine well for (ahem) a wide-ranging gameplay experience. ***Downers*** – Dragged down by disk swapping. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good solid entertainment. A bit like Lenny Henry, really. ★★★

MEGA LO MANIA
Image Works £30.99

Uppers – Brilliant sound effects, gorgeous speech, jolly nice graphics, completely compulsive gameplay. ***Downers*** – Perhaps just a tad frustrating at times. ***The Bottom Line*** – The most accessible and arguably the most enjoyable god-sim to date. ★★★★★

MEGA TRAVELLER 1
Empire £30.64

Uppers – Terrifying depth, friendly and helpful controls, great atmosphere, excellent balance of strategy and action. ***Downers*** – It might all seem a bit too familiar to *Elite* players; occasional long disk-access pauses can irritate. ***The Bottom Line*** – A wonderful piece of role-playing software that everyone should play at least once. After that, you're unlikely to want to stop. ★★★★★

MERCS
US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Faithful conversion of the coin-op, good-looking and fast-moving...***Downers*** – ...but still just another *Commando* clone. ***The Bottom Line*** – Great at what it does, but you're likely to want rather more from a game in this day and age. ★★★

METAL MUTANT
Silmarils £25.99

Uppers – A simple concept (exploration, fighting and puzzle solving) which works well, and has a perfect difficulty curve. ***Downers*** – Lacking any really exciting features, and too simple for some.

The Bottom Line – A middle-of-the-road game, which achieves what it sets out to do, but doesn't really astound. ★★★

MIDNIGHT RESISTANCE
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Well-balanced gameplay with a smooth difficulty curve makes it stand out from a hundred similar coin-op conversions. Actually more playable than the arcade original. ***Downers*** – Control is awkward at first; could be a touch faster. ***The Bottom Line*** – Best of its type. ★★★

MIGHTY BOMB JACK
Elite £24.99

Uppers – Classic gameplay with added 16-bit features like, erm, power-ups. ***Downers*** – Sprawling levels lose the original's frantic urgency. ***The Bottom Line*** – Dull, dull, and then again dull. ★

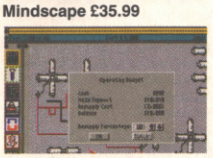
MIG-29
Domark £29.99

Uppers – So real you'll be be hanging pictures of Gorby on your wall. ***Downers*** – Only five missions, with little in the way of excitement. ***The Bottom Line*** – Brave, but ultimately too techie for most Amiga owners. ★★★

MONOPOLY
Leisure Genius £19.99

Uppers – A faithful version of the classic (to say the least) board-game. ***Downers*** – Who the hell wants to play a board-game on their computer anyway? ***The Bottom Line*** – Competently done, but arguably quite pointless. ★★

MOONBASE
Mindscape £35.99



Uppers – Entertaining and addictive game in the best Sim City tradition. ***Downers*** – Just a bit too close to Sim City for comfort, though. ***Bottom Line*** – Fairly short-term entertainment, and more than a touch overpriced. ★★★

MOONSHINE RACERS
Millennium £24.99

Uppers: Erm, great hillbilly music. ***Downers:*** Slow, graphically horrible, totally derivative. ***The Bottom Line***: Almost as bad as Amiga *Chase HQ*, and you've got to admit that's pretty damn bad. ★

MUDS
Rainbow Arts £24.99

Uppers – Quite funny. ***Downers*** – Do we really need another rugby/basketball/ violence-based future sport? ***The Bottom Line*** – Giving everything silly names doesn't make this game different to the dozen others it's just the same as. ★★

MYSTICAL
Infogrames £24.99

Uppers – Fresh graphical approach to the the usual fantasy scenario. ***Downers*** – Really badly-thought-out two-player mode. ***The Bottom Line*** – An uninspired *Gauntlet* clone. ★★

'NAM
Domark £24.95

Uppers – Heavily researched, convincing and (dirty word) educational strategic war game. ***Downers*** – Very hard to win, the whole serious look to the thing could be a turn off. ***The Bottom Line*** – Political as well as tactical decision making gives a new dimension to war games. ★★★

NARC
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Great blood-spattering action; very close to the coin-op. ***Downers*** – Very dodgy on the playability front (not to say morally). ***The Bottom Line*** – Limited. ★★

NARCO POLICE
Dinamic £24.99

Uppers – Looks excellent. ***Downers*** – Computer takes a 'creative' attitude towards obeying control commands. ***The Bottom Line*** – Loud and action-packed blaster for expert commandos. ★★

NAVY SEALS
Ocean £25.39

Uppers – Quite good fun in a mindless arcade runaround sort of way. ***Downers*** – Technically unimpressive (to say the least), and there's very little to it. ***Bottom Line*** – Looks like an ST port, but if you can forget you paid £25 for it, it's pretty enjoyable. ★★

NEBULUS 2 – POGO A-GO-GO
21st Century Entertainment £25.99

Uppers – The winning formula of the original is at the core of the game. ***Downers*** – The addition of power ups ruins the beautiful simplicity which made the first such a classic. ***The Bottom Line*** – A real waste. This is the worst kind of sequel, one which just regurgitates the ideas of its predecssor, but in a far less playable way. ★★★★

NIGHT SHIFT
Lucasfilm (US Gold) £24.99

Uppers – Graphically innovative and full of character. ***Downers*** – Detail-packed background can make it hard to see where the actual platforms are; more time spent loading than playing. ***The Bottom Line*** – A few instructions would work wonders, but the game's overwhelming charm pulls it through. ★★★

NEW YORK WARRIORS
Virgin £19.99

Uppers – Reasonably atmospheric, undemanding blaster. ***Downers*** – Oh God, *Ikari Warriors Part 844194365408354*. ***The Bottom Line*** – You can buy much better, cheaper. ★

NINE LIVES
ARC £24.99

Uppers – Cute and inventive platform fun. ***Downers*** – Tougher than Mike Tyson in a suit of armour. With a bazooka. ***The Bottom Line*** – You've got as much chance of finishing it as Wile E. Coyote has of catching Road Runner. ★★★

NINJA WARRIORS
Virgin £19.99

Uppers – Novel 'Cinemascope'-esque screen layout. Dynamic Loading System is a boon but doesn't get rid of irritating swapping. ***Downers*** – Extremely repetitive action palls quickly. ***The Bottom Line*** – Even for a game of this type, the gameplay is too limited to hold the attention for any length of time. ★★

NITRO
Psygnosis £24.99

Uppers – Groovy graphics, smooth scrolling, excellent car-handling. ***Downers*** – A practically infinite-credit system means the game has little sense of urgency. You have to guess the course on later levels. ***The Bottom Line*** – . Needs more in the way of immediate danger to be addictive, but (unlike many similar games) is as fun in one player mode as with a couple of chums. ★★★

OBITUS
Psygnosis £34.99

Uppers – Intro would make a great Amiga *Deathchase* game. ***Downers*** – *Obitus* itself is a dull *Dungeon Master* rip-off. ***The Bottom Line*** – Boring and ridiculously priced. ★★

ONSLAUGHT
Hewson £24.99

Uppers – Lovely sound and music; lots of depth. ***Downers*** – Very confusing graphics and gameplay, and the main sequences are technically below the level of your average budget game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Caught between the two stools of wargaming and platform zap games, this isn't a very good example of either. ★★

OOOPS UP
Demonware £24.95

Uppers – Arcade fun in the *Pang*, er, 'tradition'. ***Downers*** – Colossally inferior to the real thing. ***The Bottom Line*** – The excellent sampled music isn't enough to save this bare-faced rip-off. Check out the real thing instead. ★★

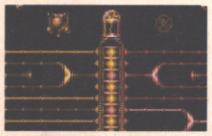
OPERATION THUNDERBOLT
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Utterly mindless genocidal slaughterfest; perhaps the best *Op Wolf* style game to date. ***Downers*** – More of the coin-op's appeal is down to the cabinet-mounted Uzi than you might think, leaving the Amiga version somewhat 'flat'. ***The Bottom Line*** – Everything you could expect a conversion of *Operation Thunderbolt* to be. ★★★

PANG
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – A perfect arcade conversion; novel two player mode and heaps of addictiveness make it the last word in cute games. ***Downers*** – The long wait between games is a bit of a bind. ***The Bottom Line*** – You'll be blowing bubbles forever. ★★★★★

PARADROID 90
Hewson £24.99



Uppers – Nothing compares to *Paradroid* in terms of original gameplay and elegant bas-relief graphics. ***Downers*** – Old C64 games players may be disappointed with the lack of new features. ***The Bottom Line*** – A five year old game idea, and it still wipes the floor with most competition. ★★★★★

PGA TOUR GOLF
Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – Excellently presented, comprehensive, and easy as pie to get into. ***Downers*** – There's a limited amount of scope to any golf game, and *PGA* doesn't even try to transcend it. ***The Bottom Line*** – The pinnacle of Amiga golf so far. ★★★★★

PICK'N'PILE
Ubi Soft £19.99

Uppers – Fascinating mix of *Puzznic* and *Boulder Dash*. ***Downers*** – 8-bit graphics don't help visual clarity any. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not enough variation to sustain it for long. ★★

POLICE QUEST 2
Sierra (Activision) £34.95

Uppers – Er, very realistic sim of a policeman's lot. ***Downers*** – ie half the game is form-filling. ***The Bottom Line*** – Too much like a tedious day at the office. ★★

POPULOUS
Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – Totally unique gameplay and smooth 3D isometric graphics add up to a game with depth and sparkle. ***Downers*** – The icon control system really is very confusing. ***The Bottom Line*** – An essential for all open-minded Amiga owners. ★★★★★

THE POWER
Demonware £24.99

Uppers – Heaps of levels and a screen designer keep lasting appeal up, and the music is excellent. ***Downers*** – A touch derivative, and lacks that indefinable something that makes a puzzle game great. ***The Bottom Line*** – Try before you buy, you might like it, but rather average to our eyes. ★★★

POWER DRIFT
Activision £19.99

Uppers – All the arcade's tracks, characters, and secret features. ***Downers*** – The graphics can get very confusing, and the gameplay isn't really that close to the original. ***The Bottom Line*** – A good stab at a very difficult conversion, but not quite good enough. ★★★

POWERMONGER
Electronic Arts £29.99

Uppers – The brave new face of wargames... ***Downers*** – ...which looks suspiciously like *Populous*. ***The Bottom Line*** – Despite similarities to a certain other title, *Powermonger* really is an excellent game in its own right. ★★★★

PP HAMMER AND HIS PNEUMATIC WEAPON
Demonware £25.53

Uppers – Nicely old-fashioned platform action. Plenty of scope for double entrendres too. ***Downers*** – Annoying niggles and a tendency towards over-complication spoil it a bit.

The Bottom Line – Good, but it could easily have been a lot better. ★★★

PREHISTORIK
Titus £25.53

Uppers – Some excellent cartoon graphics and humorous touches make it an instantly likeable game. ***Downers*** – Suffers in comparison to *Toki* and *Chuck Rock*. Needs a number of rough edges polishing up. ***The Bottom Line*** – A nice enough little caveman romp, but it's not really an essential purchase. ★★★

PREDATOR 2
Image Works £25.99

Uppers – Lots and lots of zapping to be done and, er, that's about it really. ***Downers*** – Poor colour choice, unimaginative gameplay, bad control feel. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not as good as *Operation Wolf*, and now some £18 more expensive. Don't bother. ★★

PRINCE OF PERSIA
Broderbund £24.99

Uppers – Phenomenal animation, loads of atmosphere and some good old-fashioned gameplay. ***Downers*** – Control is initially tricky, and getting sent to the start of a level every time you die is always annoying. ***The Bottom Line*** – Technically stunning and great fun at the same time. Why can't all games be like this? ★★★★★

PROFLIGHT
Hi Soft £39.95

Uppers – Terrifyingly accurate – possibly the most accurate flight simulator ever. ***Downers*** – Such a good simulator that there isn't really room for any game at all. ***Bottom Line*** – Miles too realistic to be any fun to play. Still, it's less expensive than a real flying lesson. ★★

PRO TENNIS TOUR 2
Ubi Soft £24.99

Uppers – Possibly the most realistic sports sim to grace the Amiga, with features galore. ***Downers*** – So if you hate the real thing, you won't go for this. ***The Bottom Line*** – Nothing short of wonderful. ★★★★

PURSUIT TO EARTH
Exocet £19.95

Uppers – Reminiscent of *Gyruss*, the classic arcade zapper. ***Downers*** – But completely crap. ***The Bottom Line*** – About as much fun as getting hit by a real Exocet. ★

PUZZNIC
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Classically simple and very addictive, not to mention original. ***Downers*** – Infuriatingly tough on later levels. ***The Bottom Line*** – Don't be put off by the useless graphics, this is a wonderful brain teaser. ★★★★

QUEST FOR GLORY II – TRIAL BY FIRE
Sierra £40.85

Uppers – Sorry, can't think of any. Oh no, wait, you do get lots of disks for your money. ***Downers*** – But no game to put on them. Incompetently programmed, dreadfully-designed, staggeringly-overpriced trash. ***The Bottom Line*** – Possibly the worst Amiga game you will ever see. Avoid it like an bad-tempered tiger with toothache. ★

RAILROAD TYCOON
MicroProse £29.99

Uppers – Frightening amount of depth. ***Downers*** – Very slow to get into (and very slow even when you *do* get into it). ***The Bottom Line*** – If you've got a lot of time to invest in it, well worth a look. ★★★★

RALLY CROSS CHALLENGE
Anco £19.95

Uppers – Well-programmed *Super Sprint* clone that's great fun with multiple players. ***Downers*** – Limited lastability. ***The Bottom Line*** – Still one of the best in its field, but that's more down to lack of competition than anything else. ★★

RANX
Ubi Soft £24.99

Uppers – Totally ideologically unsound. ***Downers*** – Totally ideologically unsound. ***The Bottom Line*** – Brilliantly-presented but ultimately limited comic strip beat-'em-up. Ideologically unsound. ★★

RBI TWO BASEBALL
Domark £29.99

Uppers – Excellent simulation of baseball, and beautifully presented to boot. ***Downers*** – Over-priced and not all that hot on lasting appeal. ***Bottom Line*** – Very good, but a bit limited, and not quite a classic. ★★★★

RENEGADE LEGION INTERCEPTOR
SSI/US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Military hardware a-go-go gives it instant RPG appeal. ***Downers*** – The strategy isn't deep enough, and the action sequences are way out of date. ***Bottom Line*** – Tales of galactic empires and warfare are a good idea, but this one just falls flat. ★

REVELATION
Krisalis £19.99

Uppers – Neat idea – a puzzle game based on safe cracking. ***Downers*** – Too complex to just pick up and play – bad news for a puzzler. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not bad, but could have been better presented (and who thought up that utterly meaningless name?) ★★

ROBOCOP 2
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Great graphics, generally excellent presentation. ***Downers*** – Awkward controls, some infuriating gameplay traits, and it's all a touch too formulaic. ***The Bottom Line*** – Could have been a good deal better. ★★★

ROGUE TROOPER
Krisalis £24.99

Uppers – Fairly entertaining arcade adventure with devious but logical puzzles and an excellent free collectors' comic. ***Downers*** – One life – one mistake and you're all the way back to the start of the first level (Aaarrgh!) ***The Bottom Line*** – Good fun for the persistent, and a good licence for a change. ★★

R-TYPE II
Activision £25.99

Uppers – 99.99% arcade-perfect, and a beautiful and addictive shoot-'em-up in its own right. ***Downers*** – A couple of tiny bugs, and maybe off-puttingly difficult. (For wimps, anyway). ***Bottom Line*** – The best space blast for the Amiga yet, and possibly the best coin-op conversion too. Absolutely superb. ★★★★★

SARAKON
Virgin £19.99

Uppers – Brilliant *Shanghai*-inspired gameplay, make this a strategy classic, and the price is a nice surprise. ***Downers*** – Slightly indistinct symbols can occasionally confuse matters. ***The Bottom Line*** – A supremely addictive puzzler, in the finest 'takes over your entire life' tradition. ★★★★

SEARCH FOR THE KING
Accolade £34.99

Uppers – Superb Elvis gags and attention to detail (particularly in the graphics) mean graphic adventure fans will take to it immediately. ***Downers*** – Accolade blow it to a certain extent with their inefficient parser system. ***The Bottom Line*** – Still a long way to go before it competes with the likes of *Monkey Island*. ★★★

SHANGHAI
Activision £19.99

Uppers – Based on an ancient Chinese tile game, so you know it's going to torture your mind, and it does. Friendly presentation too, and the multi-player against-the-clock games are action-packed enough for the most frenzied blasting fan. ***Downers*** – Slightly fiddly graphics can play havoc with your eyes. ***The Bottom Line*** – Scarily gripping for a game with no moving graphics. The first time you do it you'll want to take out an advert in The Times to tell everybody. ★★★★★

SHOCKWAVE
Digital Magic £24.99

Uppers – Lightning fast arcade quality *Afterburner/Star Wars* graphics. ***Downers*** – Tactical sections get in the way. ***The Bottom Line*** – A potentially great arcade monster shoot-'em-up ruined by trying to be brainy as well. ★★★

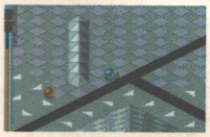
THE SIMPSONS
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – A good licence AND a good game. Brilliant console-like scrolling arcade platform sort of thing. ***Downers*** – The main game doesn't really rely on the Simpsons theme, and a bit too complicated for Bart's younger fans. ***The Bottom Line*** – The licence of the year, probably. ★★★★★

SIRIUS 7
CRL £24.99

Uppers – Technically adequate. ***Downers*** – No thought, no imagination, no game, no fun. ***The Bottom Line*** – Almost as action-packed as *Xenon 2*. In pause mode. ★

SLIDERS
Palace £25.99



Uppers – Clean 3D isometric graphics, with loads of sporting and *Marble Madness* overtones thrown in for good measure. ***Downers*** – The result is frankly less enjoyable than it sounds. ***The Bottom Line*** – Buy yourself *Spindizzy Worlds* or *Speedball 2* instead. ★★

SKI OR DIE
Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – *Skate Or Die* but with snow. ***Downers*** – *Skate Or Die* but with snow. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fun (for a while) with friends, but basically an old fashioned, patchy collection of unimpressive sub games. ★

SKULL AND CROSSBONES
Domark £24.99

Uppers – It's all reasonably true to the coin-op. ***Downers*** – Pity it was so crap then, isn't it? Appallingly slow, critically limited and bug-ridden. ***The Bottom Line*** – You'd have more fun being keelhauled. ★

SPEEDBALL II
Image Works £24.99

Uppers – The ultimate future sport game to date – fast, brutal, enormously playable. The Bitmaps' finest moment. ***Downers*** – Teams can be hard to tell apart in the heat of the action. ***The Bottom Line*** – Buy or die. ★★★★★

SPELLBOUND
Psyclapse £24.99

Uppers – Well-drawn backdrops, and, erm, the packaging is nice. ***Downers*** – Almost no in-game sound, practically nothing in the way of action. ***The Bottom Line*** – Hugely boring arcade adventure thing that's overpriced by £20. ★

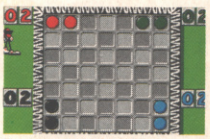
SPINDIZZY WORLDS
Activision £24.99

Uppers – Another example of an 8-bit classic brought bang up to date with a sprawling play area and loads of new features. ***Downers*** – Bizarre controls to get to grips with and the graphics could be better. ***The Bottom Line*** – Superlative game design, and total addiction. Frustrating as hell, but nonetheless a masterpiece. ★★★★★

SPIRIT OF EXCALIBUR
Virgin £24.99

Uppers – Plenty of variation, and it certainly all looks lovely. ***Downers*** – Pitifully slow, and the different sections don't really seem to gel together. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you've got a few hours to kill while you're waiting for a train, this is a game that you can load up without fear of it causing you to miss it. (On the other hand, standing on the platform might be more fun). ★★

SPOT
Leisure Genius £25.99



Uppers – Brilliantly-designed Othello based board game which still manages to offer something new and different (and even supports up to four players). ***Downers*** – The presentation lacks polish in places. ***The Bottom Line*** – A class board-like strategy act. ★★★★★

THE SPY WHO LOVED ME
Domark £24.99

Uppers – Lovely tiny graphics, tough gameplay that nonetheless rewards a bit of effort. ***Downers*** – Only half-a-dozen levels – all completable after some practice – means it won't last all that long. ***The Bottom Line*** – Easily the best Bond game so far, and a fun *Spy Hunter* clone into the bargain, though not something you'll play for months. ★★★

STARGLIDER II
Rainbird £24.99

Uppers – Instant 3D blasting appeal, with extra depth for those who want it. ***Downers*** – Slightly too repetitive in the long-term. ***The Bottom Line*** – Still one of the best *Star Wars*-inspired releases on the Amiga. ★★★

STELLAR 7
Dynamix (Sierra) £24.99

Uppers – Appealingly old-fashioned blast from the past in the form of (yet another!) up-dated *Battlezone*. ***Downers*** – Ever-so-slightly sluggish vector graphics and optimistic pricing make it a bit of a luxury. ***The Bottom Line*** – Satisfyingly mindless – but that's both a strength and a weakness. ★★

STORMBALL
Millennium £24.99

Uppers – Reasonably passable graphics. ***Downers*** – Utterly dire game design, no feeling of speed or excitement, highly confusing and largely pointless. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you're looking for a good way to waste £25, throw it down a drain rather than buy this. ★

STRIDER 2
US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Good animation and

plenty of challenge. ***Downers*** – Very little advance on *Strider*, and shoddily presented. ***The Bottom Line*** – It's everything that's bad about sequels, and bears all the hallmarks of a rush job. ★★

STRIKER MANAGER

D&H Games £24.99

Uppers – From the people who brought you *Football Director* (yes, that's its only good point). ***Downers*** – Statistic frenzy with absolutely no gameplay whatsoever. ***The Bottom Line*** – Could push the boundaries of computer games backwards by ten years. ★

STUN RUNNER

Tengen (Domark) £24.99

Uppers – Er...the music isn't entirely crap. ***Downers*** – Hopelessly slow, graphically primitive, plus there's a very terminal lack of excitement. ***The Bottom Line*** – We'd rather see a great conversion of *Galaxians* than someone make a pig's ear of a game they knew they couldn't convert in the first place. ★

SUPER MONACO GP

US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Well-programmed and fun. ***Downers*** – Bears very little resemblance to the coin-op. ***The Bottom Line*** – A very good racing game, but don't expect the arcade. ★★★

SUPER OFF-ROAD RACER

Virgin £19.99

Uppers – Flawless arcade conversion. ***Downers*** – The track sequence, though identical to the original, is silly (four of the first eight races are on track 1), the difficulty curve is steep, and control is just a tad over-sensitive. ***The Bottom Line*** – The Amiga's best *Super Sprint* game yet, but with some annoying niggles that stop it being the true classic it might have been. ★★★★

SUPER SKWEEK

Loriciel £19.99

Uppers – Cute *Defusion/Painter*-based game with power-ups and add-ons galore. ***Downers*** – Perhaps a little to French for most of us. ***The Bottom Line*** – Could do with having another fiver chopped off the price, but otherwise great fun. ★★★

SUPER WONDER BOY

Activision £19.99

Uppers – Perfect difficulty curve lets you get just a little bit further every go. Cute graphics add to the charm and the shops where you can spend your gold give it a little extra scope. ***Downers*** – Slightly lacking in action, too slow for some. Not exactly modern looking. ***The Bottom Line*** – Great game in the *Mario* vein, but with less enemies and more depth. ★★★

SWAP

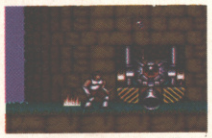
Palace £25.99

Uppers – Interesting and new idea for a puzzle game, programmed perfectly competently. ***Downers*** – It just isn't captivating, and never rises above the averageness.

The Bottom Line – Fails to inspire any emotions at all. It's not good, it's not bad. It's just a bit bland. ★★

SWITCHBLADE II

Gremlin £25.99



Uppers – Gorgeous console-like graphics, tried-and-tested gameplay, packed full of detail and lovely touches. ***Downers*** – Perhaps just a little too simple. ***The Bottom Line*** – Absolutely superb. Arguably the best Amiga platform game to date. ★★★★★

SWIV

Storm £24.99

Uppers – Looks good, sounds good, comes with a neat two-player option – and all in one (massive) level too! ***Downers*** – There aren't any (unless you find all those drab military-style colours a bit depressing). ***The Bottom Line*** – Frantic – one of the best shoot-'em-ups we've seen. ★★★★★

SWORDS AND GALLEONS

Idea £25.99

Uppers – Uses the classic trading game style to. great effect. ***Downers*** – Easy to complete and the stupid omission of a save game option. ***The Bottom Line*** – A minority interest sort of affair. ★★

TANGRAM

Thalion £25.53

Uppers – Perfectly adequate computer translation of the classic Oriental puzzle. ***Downers*** – ...unfortunately it's a really dumb idea for a conversion, and the extras (time limit and suchlike) are intrusive and pointless. ***Bottom Line*** – Getting a real wooden Tangram set would be more fun, as well as much cheaper. ★

TETRIS

Infogrames £19.99

Uppers – Well, it is still *Tetris*. ***Downers*** – But it's probably the worst version yet seen on the Amiga, and that's saying something. ***The Bottom Line*** – Completely stinky. (Stick with the PD versions). ★

THEME PARK MYSTERY

Image Works £24.99

Uppers – Great feel; looks and sounds lovely. ***Downers*** – Arcade sections are fairly pointless. ***The Bottom Line*** – Games which mix adventures with arcade sequences always suffer for it. ★★

THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND

US Gold £25.99

Uppers – The closest thing yet to a fully interactive story. Enormous playability, pleasing puzzles and great dollops of – yes! – genuinely witty humour come together to form something very glorious indeed. ***Downers*** – Despite the five disks, you'll still need a full meg, and once the game is completed you'll probably never come back to it again. ***The Bottom Line*** – An adventure that looks and plays better than almost any arcade game. Software heaven.★★★★★

TEAM SUZUKI

Gremlin £24.99

Uppers – Very fast, with some pretty hairy track views. Unintentionally hilarious replay feature. ***Downers*** – Insanely sensitive to control. ***The Bottom Line*** – Enough fun to keep you playing until you can at least stay on the road for five seconds at 60mph, but a bit too unrealistic to compete with *Indy 500*. ★★★

TEENAGE MUTANT HERO TURTLES

Mirrorsoft £24.99

Uppers – It doesn't have the word 'Ninja' in the title...***Downers*** – ...but even that doesn't save it from being utterly awful in every way. ***The Bottom Line*** – You'd have more fun playing with a real turtle. Or a real mutant. ★

TOKI

Ocean £25.39

Uppers – The (latest) definitive coin-op conversion. Beautiful platform action to make you go ape. ***Downers*** – The sound is slightly disappointing, and the game is simply too small. ***The Bottom Line*** – What's there is brilliant, if only there was more of it. ★★★★★

TORVAK THE WARRIOR

Core Design £24.99

Uppers – Beautiful, gloomy graphics. ***Downers*** – Incredibly slow and unremarkable *Rastan* game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Unresponsive control and a talentless hero cripple the gameplay. Check out *Chuck Rock* to find out what Core can really do. ★

TOTAL RECALL

Ocean £24.99

Uppers – A fair bit of gameplay variation. ***Downers*** – Unfriendly controls, uninspired design. ***The Bottom Line*** – Solid but unexciting. No feel for the movie. (And couldn't they afford the rights to use Arnie's real face?) ★★

TOURNAMENT GOLF

Elite £24.99

Uppers – Authentic arcade port. ***Downers*** – Nobody ever played the arcade game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Completely average golfing yawnerama. ★★

TOWER FRA

Thalion £24.99

Uppers – Yes, you guessed it, it's an air traffic control tower simulation. Not as boring as it sounds. ***Downers*** – It's still fairly boring though. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good training for the next generation of air traffic controllers. ★★

TOYOTA CELICA RALLY

Gremlin £24.99

Uppers – Very impressively detailed – a lot of effort has been taken to get an authentic feel here. ***Downers*** – Be prepared to dig deep to find the actual game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Perhaps too good a simulation to be much fun to play. ★★

3D CONSTRUCTION KIT

Domark/Incentive £49.99

Uppers – Creating your own games (or simply designing little worlds) is great fun. ***Downers*** – Well, it's not really a game as such, is it? It's pretty slow too, and making anything really worthwhile gets very complicated. ***The Bottom Line*** – Expensive and of limited appeal, but if you've always itched to create a Freescape game you can't really complain. ★★★

TURRICAN 2

Rainbow Arts £24.99

Uppers – Enjoyable mindless blasting. ***Downers*** – Erm, has there been some mistake here? Someone appears to have sent us a copy of *Turrican*. ***The Bottom Line*** – Better than the original, but that's the only way in which it's different. ★★★

ULTIMA V

Origin (Mindscape) £29.99

Uppers – The scope and depth of *Ultima V* goes way beyond other role-playing adventures, even previous Ultima releases. ***Downers*** – Not a bit of joystick action in sight; some may find the size of the game daunting. ***The Bottom Line*** – *Ultima V* offers arguably the best in graphic fantasy (at least until *Ultima VI* comes along). ★★★★★

ULTIMATE RIDE

Mindscape £24.99

Uppers – Realistic handling. ***Downers*** – Dreadful gameplay.***The Bottom Line*** – Another failed attempt at the accuracy/fun game balance. ★★

UMS II

Rainbird (MicroProse) £34.99

Uppers – The pinnacle of tech-head wargames, with more user-definable bits than you could ever need. ***Downers*** – Atrocious documentation could mentally scar beginners for life. ***The Bottom Line*** – It won't win the wargaming fraternity any new members, but it'll put some in seventh heaven. ★★★

VECTOR CHAMPIONSHIP RUN

Impulze £24.99

Uppers – Pretty speedy. ***Downers*** – Uncontrollable. ***The Bottom Line*** – What's the point in a game you can't play? (c.f. Rhetorical Questions For Journalists, Vol. 1) ★

VIZ

Virgin £24.99

Uppers – Very true to the comic. ***Downers*** – Very shallow and limited. The jokes only really work the first time you see them. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fun while it lasts, but after the first couple of hours you've seen all it's got to offer. ★★

VOODOO NIGHTMARE

Palace £24.99

Uppers – Clear, sharp graphics. ***Downers*** – Maddeningly sensitive controls. ***The Bottom Line*** – A nice change – an average game. ★★

WARLOCK THE AVENGER

Millenium £24.99

Uppers – Playable and quite engrossing scrolling arcade adventure romp. ***Downers*** – An 8-bit game in 16-bit's clothing. ***The Bottom Line*** – *Druid* slightly updated for the 90s, and not by any stretch of the imagination worth £25. ★★

WARZONE

Core Design £20.99

Uppers – Graphics have a degree of character to them, and it's pretty tough. ***Downers*** – Adds very little to the hackneyed *Ikari Warriors* format. ***The Bottom Line*** – Competent but deadly dull shoot-'em-up that you've seen a dozen times before. ★★

WHITE SHARKS

Demonware £24.99

Uppers – Exceptionally good graphics, novel 'choose-your-own-power-ups' weapon system. ***Downers*** – Too fast to have any decent feel, and incredibly unimaginative.***The Bottom Line*** – The game that put the 'bog standard' into 'bog standard shoot-'em-up'. Duff. ★★

WILDLIFE

MD Production £19.99

Uppers – Ideologically sound. ***Downers*** – *Operation Wolf* without shooting is like swimming without water.***The Bottom Line*** – Utterly desperate. ★

WINGS

Cinemaware £29.99

Uppers – Authentic WW1 feel. ***Downers*** – Ludicrous disk swapping. Very little gameplay. ***The Bottom Line*** – Far too simple for a sim, and too expensive for what it is. ★★

WINGS OF DEATH

Thalion £24.99

Uppers – Range of power-ups is good, even including power-downs! ***Downers*** – Not the most innovative game ever. ***The Bottom Line*** – Almost as much fun as *Xenon 2*, though not as pretty. ★★★

WOLFPACK

Mirrorsoft £24.99

Uppers – Very deep (ho ho). ***Downers*** – Sub sims never score highly on the thrillometer, and this one is no exception. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not as overly techie-biased as many in the genre, but still not one to recommend to the hardened action junkies. ★★

WONDERLAND

Virgin £24.95

Uppers – An evocative telling of the classic Lewis Carrol tale utilising a pretty advanced user-interface. ***Downers*** – Unless you've got a very powerful Amiga with a screen that can handle interlace, the whole thing is very unwieldy. It's not got the best parser in the world either. ***The Bottom Line*** – Brave, but after all the hype the product is something of a let-down. Not a patch on *Monkey Island*. ★★★

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SOCCER

Elite £24.99

Uppers – Very good copy of the coin-op (sob). ***Downers*** – Poor playability, you never get two seconds on the ball. ***The Bottom Line*** – Knocked out in the first round. ★★

WRATH OF THE DEMON

Readysoft £29.99

Uppers – Cheaper than *Shadow Of The Beast II*. ***Downers*** – Almost exactly the same in every other respect, even down to inclusion of a spiffing intro sequence. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you liked *S.O.T.B.II* you'll already have bought it, so you won't need this. Otherwise a good alternative. ★★

WRECKERS

Audiogenic £24.99

Uppers – Some refreshing game ideas add a new angle to the old 'aliens-overrun-space station' story. ***Downers*** – The whole thing feels far too much like an 8-bit game. ***The Bottom Line*** – All the elements of a good game are there – they just haven't been tied together properly. ★★

XIPHOS

Electronic Zoo £24.99

Uppers – Silky smooth and subtle. ***Downers*** – Takes far too long to get into the action. ***The Bottom Line*** – Only for the dedicated space trader. ★★

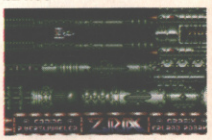
ZARATHRUSTA

Hewson £24.99

Uppers – The *Thrust* gameplay is timeless, and it's been updated with 1990s graphics, resulting in something very special indeed. ***Downers*** – At heart though, it's still a game that used to sell for £1.99 going for £25, which isn't a bargain in anyone's language. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good fun, but to be honest, not really very good value. ★★★

ZIRIAX

The Software Business £24.99



Uppers – Pretty *Scramble* variant. ***Downers*** – Seriously overloaded in the difficulty department. ***The Bottom Line*** – Stupidly difficult, too much for almost everyone. More suited to a budget release. ★★

Z-OUT

Rainbow Arts £24.99

Uppers – A huge improvement on *X-Out*. ***Downers*** – The horizontally scrolling shoot-'em-up with knobs on thing has already been done to death. ***The Bottom Line*** – A better *R-Type* than *R-Type*, but it isn't different enough to make it stand out from the crowd. ★★★

AMEAGRE PRICES FOR AMIGA USERS

GAME	PRICE
3 Stooges	£7.95
3D Construction Kit	£32.95
3D Pool	£7.95
A.P.B.	£6.70
Addicted To Fun - Rainbow (comp)	£12.95
Advanced Fruit Machine	£5.99
Afrika Korps	£18.95
After Burner	£6.70
Amnios	£12.95
AMOS the Creator	£32.95
Aquaventura	£22.95
Arkanoid II - Revenge Of Doh	£6.70
Armalyte	£15.96
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By Jon Hare of Sensible Software

IN THE style OF...

Welcome to In The Style Of..., our irregular series where we ask well known graphic artists to re-interpret one of their most popular games in the style of someone – or something! – completely different. Imagine what would have happened if Vincent Van Gogh had designed *Cruise For A Corpse* for instance, or film director Sam Peckinpah had had a hand in *Rodland*? And they get weirder than that too, as this month's offering shows...

'At first I was thinking of doing something in the style of Marc Chagall, a French painter who did all these medieval folk scenes full of violins, goats and bridesmaids – lots of bridesmaids! – for some reason, but in the end I decided it was probably a bit too obscure for the average AMIGA POWER reader.

'In the end then I went for this, Bobby Robson's England. We had £100 on Cameroon at 50 to one throughout the World Cup, and this shows the game where we lost it – the two teams are Cameroon and England (of course), and Cameroon are just about to score their second goal. We were really cheering them on at this point – but, of course, England went on to equalise with a penalty and then go on to win, so our excitement didn't last long.

'Most of the jokes on this screen are self explanatory, while the building, giant hole in the ground and God-like face we put in just to make it more *Mega lo Mania*-y. And no, there's no truth in the rumour we did a football In The Style Of... just to promote the new, as yet un-named, footie game we've got coming out in time for the European Championships next summer!'

Next Month: The next fabulous issue of good old AP will be on sale on (or around) October 24th (which is, as always, a Thursday). No postcards this time round (boo!), but an extra thick copy of the mag (our biggest yet) absolutely packed with Good Things. Hurrah!

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Dial A Disk	101	Software City	87
Diamond Link	113	Space City	113
Domark	65	SPD	92
Electronic Arts	18, 19	Star Associates	101
Intronic	113	Telescan	95
Jamac	95	Trojan	98
MD Office Supplies	82	Tronsoft	101
Microprose	44, 45	US Gold	3, 13, 15, 57, IFC
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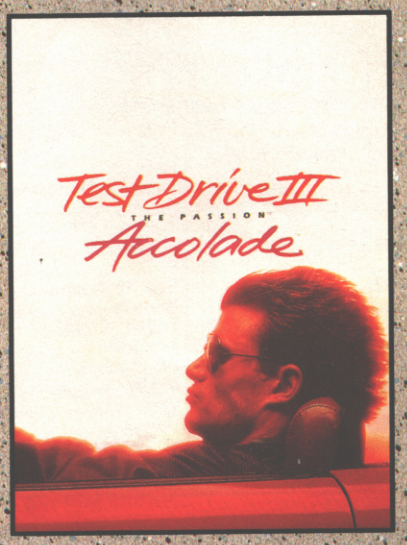

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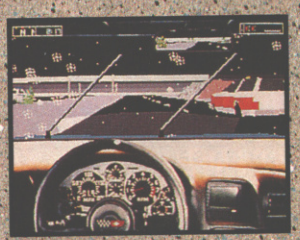

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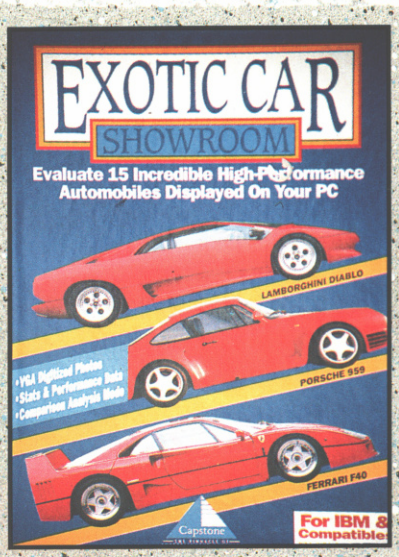

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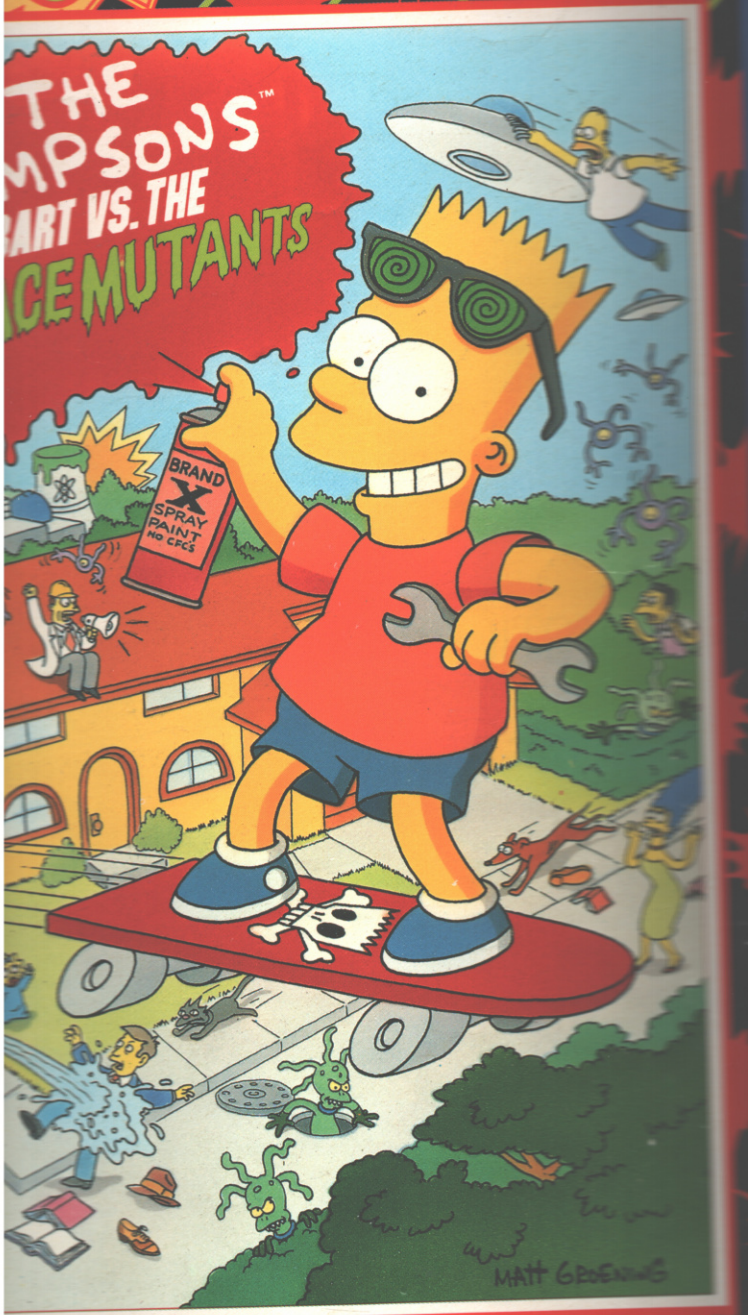

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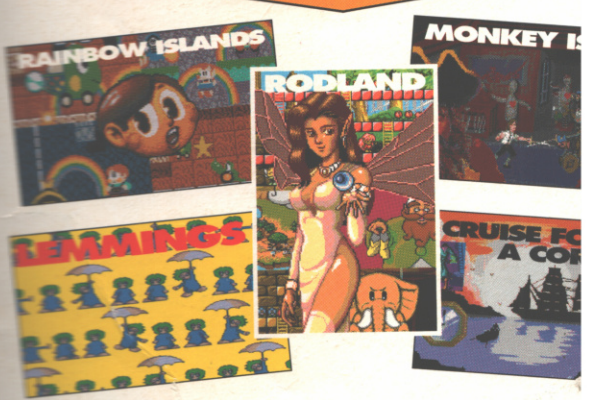

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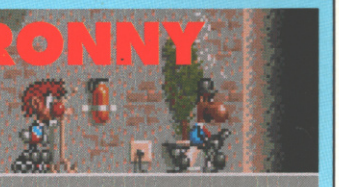

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